H. G. Wells



A Short History of The World

1922

Volume Two: From Ancient Rome to the American War of Independence

Illustrated





Edited by
George Sandulescu and **Lidia Vianu**

Contemporary Literature Press

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A Short History of the World

In Three Volumes.
Illustrated.

Edited by George Sandulescu and Lidia Vianu

Contemporary Literature Press is publishing a book about the past, written by a visionary writer who, along with Jules Verne, is considered to be the father of science fiction.

H. G. Wells's *Short History of the World* was published in 1922, the peak year of Modernism—the year when James Joyce's *Ulyssses* and T.S. Eliot's *The Waste Land* appeared. Its author was a novelist who also wrote books about the future, such as *The Time Machine, The Invisible Man, The First Men in the Moon*. Partly, the scientific and technical future imagined by Wells at the beginnig of the 20th Century has already happened.

This clearly written and amply illustrated book provides both teachers and students with possible stories about life on earth. Whether these stories follow one another logically, whether evolution is the key word, the readers will decide for themselves. One thing is certain: Wells's book is bound to improve the English of all the students who decide to read it.

Contemporary Literature Press publică acum o carte despre trecut, scrisă de un vizionar care, împreună cu Jules Verne, este considerat a fi creat genul *science fiction*.

Scurtă istorie a lumii a fost publicată de H.G. Wells în anul 1922, anul modernist prin excelență, având în vedere că exact atunci au apărut *Ulysses* de James Joyce şi *The Waste Land* de T.S. Eliot. Autorul acestui volum de istorie a scris şi cărți despre viitor, cum ar fi *Maşina timpului, Omul invizibil, Primii oameni pe lună*. Unele descoperiri ştiințifice şi tehnice imaginate de Wells la începutul secolului XX chiar au fost ulterior făcute cu adevărat.

Cartea aceasta scrisă limpede şi bogat ilustrată aduce, pentru profesori şi elevii lor, tot felul de istorii despre viața pe Pământ. Există oare o logică în înşiruirea lor, este evoluția explicația corectă? La ceste întrebări va răspunde fiecare în felul său. Cu siguranță, însă, aveți în față o carte din care, cei care doresc, pot învăța mai bine englezeşte.

11 October 2015

Lidia Vianu

H. G. Wells



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Preface

This Short History of The World is meant to be read straight-forwardly almost as a novel is read. It gives in the most general way an account of our present knowledge of history, shorn of elaborations and complications. It has been amply illustrated, and everything has been done to make it vivid and clear. From it the reader should be able to get that general view of history which is so necessary a framework for the study of a particular period or the history of a particular country. It may be found useful as a preparatory excursion before reading of the author's much fuller and more explicit *Outline of History* is undertaken. But its especial end is to meet the needs of the busy general reader, too driven to study the maps and time charts of that *Outline* in detail, who wishes to refresh and repair his faded or fragmentary conceptions of the great adventure of mankind. It is not an abstract or condensation of that former work. Within its aim the *Outline* admits of no further condensation. This is a much more generalized History, planned and written afresh.

H. G. Wells

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Rome Comes into History

The reader will note a general similarity in the history of all these civilizations in spite of the effectual separation caused by the great barriers of the Indian north-west frontier and of the mountain masses of Central Asia and further India. First for thousands of years the heliolithic culture spread over all the warm and fertile river valleys of the old world and developed a temple system and priest rulers about its sacrificial traditions. Apparently its first makers were always those brunette peoples we have spoken of as the central race of mankind. Then the nomads came in from the regions of seasonal grass and seasonal migrations and superposed their own characteristics and often their own language on the primitive civilization. They subjugated and stimulated it, and were stimulated to fresh developments and made it here one thing and here another. In Mesopotamia it was the Elamite and then the Semite, and at last the Nordic Medes and Persians and the Greeks who supplied the ferment; over the region of the Ægean peoples it was the Greeks; in India it was the Aryan-speakers; in Egypt there was a thinner infusion of conquerors into a more intensely saturated priestly civilization; in China, the Hun conquered and was absorbed and was followed by fresh Huns. China was Mongolized just as Greece and North India were Aryanized and Mesopotamia Semitized and Aryanized. Everywhere the nomads destroyed much, but everywhere they brought in a new spirit of free enquiry and moral innovation. They questioned the beliefs of immemorial ages. They let daylight into the temples. They set up kings who were neither priests nor gods but mere leaders among their captains and companions.



The Dying Gaul.
The statue in the National Museum, Rome, depicting a Gaul stabbing himself, after killing his wife, in the presence of his enemies.

In the centuries following the sixth century B.C. we find everywhere a great breaking down of ancient traditions and a new spirit of moral and intellectual enquiry awake, a spirit never more to be altogether stilled in the great progressive movement of mankind. We find reading and writing becoming common and accessible accomplishments among the ruling and prosperous minority; they were no longer the jealously guarded secret of the priests. Travel is increasing and transport growing easier by reason of horses and roads. A new and easy device to facilitate trade has been found in coined money.

Let us now transfer our attention back from China in the extreme east of the old

world to the western half of the Mediterranean. Here we have to note the appearance of a city which was destined to play at last a very great part indeed in human affairs, Rome.

Hitherto we have told very little about Italy in our story. It was before 1000 B.C. a land of mountain and forest and thinly populated. Aryan-speaking tribes had pressed down this peninsula and formed little towns and cities, and the southern extremity was studded with Greek settlements. The noble ruins of Pæstum preserve for us to this day something of the dignity and splendour of these early Greek establishments. A non-Aryan people, probably akin to the Ægean peoples, the Etruscans, had established themselves in the central part of the peninsula. They had reversed the usual process by subjugating various Aryan tribes. Rome when it comes into the light of history, is a little trading city at a ford on the Tiber, with a Latin-speaking population ruled over by Etruscan kings. The old chronologies gave 753 B.C. as the date of the founding of Rome, half a century later than the founding of the great Phœnician city of Carthage and twenty-three years after the first Olympiad. Etruscan tombs of a much earlier date than 753 B.C. have, however, been excavated in the Roman Forum.

In that red letter century the sixth century B.C., the Etruscan kings were expelled (510 B.C.) and Rome became an aristocratic republic with a lordly class of "patrician" families dominating a commonalty of "plebeians." Except that it spoke Latin it was not unlike many aristocratic Greek republics.

For some centuries the internal history of Rome was the story of a long and obstinate struggle for freedom and a share in the government on the part of the plebeians. It would not be difficult to find Greek parallels to this conflict, which the Greeks would have called a conflict of aristocracy with democracy. In the end the plebeians broke down most of the exclusive barriers of the old families and established a working equality with them. They destroyed the old exclusiveness, and made it possible and acceptable for Rome to extend her citizenship by the inclusion of more and more "outsiders." For while she still struggled at home, she was extending her power abroad.



Remains of the ancient Roman cisterns at Carthage.
Photo: Underwood & Underwood

The extension of Roman power began in the fifth century B.C. Until that time they had waged war, and generally unsuccessful war, with the Etruscans. There was an Etruscan fort, Veii, only a few miles from Rome which the Romans had never been able to capture. In 474 B.C. however, a great misfortune came to the Etruscans. Their fleet was destroyed by the Greeks of Syracuse in Sicily. At the same time a wave of Nordic invaders came down upon them from the north, the Gauls. Caught between Roman and Gaul, the Etruscans fell—and disappear from history. Veii was captured by the Romans. The Gauls came through to Rome and sacked the city (390 B.C.) but could not capture the Capitol. An attempted night surprise was betrayed by the cackling of some geese, and finally the invaders were bought off and retired to the north of Italy again.

The Gaulish raid seems to have invigorated rather than weakened Rome. The Romans conquered and assimilated the Etruscans, and extended their power over all central Italy from the Arno to Naples. To this they had reached within a few years of 300 B.C. Their conquests in Italy were going on simultaneously with the growth of Philip's power in Macedonia and Greece, and the tremendous raid of Alexander to

Egypt and the Indus. The Romans had become notable people in the civilized world to the east of them by the break-up of Alexander's empire.

To the north of the Roman power were the Gauls; to the south of them were the Greek settlements of Magna Græcia, that is to say of Sicily and of the toe and heel of Italy. The Gauls were a hardy, warlike people and the Romans held that boundary by a line of forts and fortified settlements. The Greek cities in the south headed by Tarentum (now Taranto) and by Syracuse in Sicily, did not so much threaten as fear the Romans. They looked about for some help against these new conquerors.

We have already told how the empire of Alexander fell to pieces and was divided among his generals and companions. Among these adventurers was a kinsman of Alexander's named Pyrrhus, who established himself in Epirus, which is across the Adriatic Sea over against the heel of Italy. It was his ambition to play the part of Philip of Macedonia to Magna Græcia, and to become protector and master-general of Tarentum, Syracuse and the rest of that part of the world. He had what was then a very efficient modern army; he had an infantry phalanx, cavalry from Thessaly—which was now quite as good as the original Macedonian cavalry—and twenty fighting elephants; he invaded Italy and routed the Romans in two considerable battles, Heraclea (280 B.C.) and Ausculum (279 B.C.), and having driven them north, he turned his attention to the subjugation of Sicily.

But this brought against him a more formidable enemy than were the Romans at that time, the Phœnician trading city of Carthage, which was probably then the greatest city in the world. Sicily was too near Carthage for a new Alexander to be welcome there to the Carthaginians; Carthage was mindful of the fate that had befallen her mother city Tyre half a century before. So she sent a fleet to encourage or compel Rome to continue the struggle, and she cut the overseas communications of Pyrrhus. Pyrrhus found himself freshly assailed by the Romans, and suffered a disastrous repulse in an attack he had made upon their camp at Beneventum between Naples and Rome.

And suddenly came news that recalled him to Epirus. The Gauls were raiding south. But this time they were not raiding down into Italy; the Roman frontier, fortified and guarded, had become too formidable for them. They were raiding down through Illyria (which is now Serbia and Albania) to Macedonia and Epirus. Repulsed by the Romans, endangered at sea by the Carthaginians, and threatened at home by the Gauls, Pyrrhus abandoned his dream of conquest and went home (275 B.C.), and the power of Rome was extended to the Straits of Messina.

On the Sicilian side of the Straits was the Greek city of Messina, and this presently fell into the hands of a gang of pirates. The Carthaginians, who were already practically overlords of Sicily and allies of Syracuse, suppressed these pirates (270 B.C.) and put in a Carthaginian garrison there. The pirates appealed to Rome and Rome listened to their complaint. And so across the Straits of Messina the great trading power of Carthage and this new conquering people, the Romans, found themselves in antagonism, face to face.

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Rome and Carthage

It was in 264 B.C. that the great struggle between Rome and Carthage, the Punic Wars, began. In that year Asoka was beginning his reign in Behar and Shi- Hwang-ti was a little child, the Museum in Alexandria was still doing good scientific work, and the barbaric Gauls were now in Asia Minor and exacting a tribute from Pergamum. The different regions of the world were still separated by insurmountable distances, and probably the rest of mankind heard only vague and remote rumours of the mortal fight that went on for a century and a half in Spain, Italy, North Africa and the western Mediterranean, between the last stronghold of Semitic power and Rome, this newcomer among Aryan-speaking peoples.

That war has left its traces upon issues that still stir the world. Rome triumphed over Carthage, but the rivalry of Aryan and Semite was to merge itself later on in the conflict of Gentile and Jew. Our history now is coming to events whose consequences and distorted traditions still maintain a lingering and expiring vitality in, and exercise a complicating and confusing influence upon, the conflicts and controversies of to-day.

The first Punic War began in 264 B.C. about the pirates of Messina. It developed into a struggle for the possession of all Sicily except the dominions of the Greek king of Syracuse. The advantage of the sea was at first with the Carthaginians. They had great fighting ships of what was hitherto an unheard-of size, quinqueremes, galleys with five banks of oars and a huge ram. At the battle of Salamis, two centuries before, the leading battleships had only been triremes with three banks. But the Romans, with extraordinary energy and in spite of the fact that they had little naval experience, set themselves to outbuild the Carthaginians. They manned the new navy they created chiefly with Greek seamen, and they invented grappling and boarding to make up for the superior seamanship of the enemy. When the Carthaginian came up to ram or shear the oars of the Roman, huge grappling irons seized him and the Roman soldiers swarmed aboard him. At Mylæ (260 B.C.) and at Ecnomus (256 B.C.) the Carthaginians were disastrously beaten. They repulsed a Roman landing near Carthage but were badly beaten at Palermo, losing one hundred and four elephants there—to grace such a triumphal procession through the Forum as Rome had never

seen before. But after that came two Roman defeats and then a Roman recovery. The last naval forces of Carthage were defeated by a last Roman effort at the battle of the Ægatian Isles (241 B.C.) and Carthage sued for peace. All Sicily except the dominions of Hiero, king of Syracuse, was ceded to the Romans.



Hannibal
Bust in the National Museum at Naples

For twenty-two years Rome and Carthage kept the peace. Both had trouble enough at home. In Italy the Gauls came south again, threatened Rome—*which in a state of panic offered human sacrifices to the Gods!*—and were routed at Telamon. Rome pushed forward to the Alps, and even extended her dominions down the Adriatic coast to Illyria. Carthage suffered from domestic insurrections and from revolts in Corsica and Sardinia, and displayed far less recuperative power. Finally, an act of intolerable aggression, Rome seized and annexed the two revolting islands.

Spain at that time was Carthaginian as far north as the river Ebro. To that boundary the Romans restricted them. Any crossing of the Ebro by the Carthaginians was to be considered an act of war against the Romans. At last in 218 B.C. the Carthaginians, provoked by new Roman aggressions, did cross this river under a

young general named Hannibal, one of the most brilliant commanders in the whole of history. He marched his army from Spain over the Alps into Italy, raised the Gauls against the Romans, and carried on the Second Punic War in Italy itself for fifteen years. He inflicted tremendous defeats upon the Romans at Lake Trasimere and at Cannæ, and throughout all his Italian campaigns no Roman army stood against him and escaped disaster. But a Roman army had landed at Marseilles and cut his communications with Spain; he had no siege train, and he could never capture Rome. Finally the Carthaginians, threatened by the revolt of the Numidians at home, were forced back upon the defence of their own city in Africa, a Roman army crossed into Africa, and Hannibal experienced his first defeat under its walls at the battle of Zama (202 B.C.) at the hands of Scipio Africanus the Elder. The battle of Zama ended this Second Punic War. Carthage capitulated; she surrendered Spain and her war fleet; she paid an enormous indemnity and agreed to give up Hannibal to the vengeance of the Romans. But Hannibal escaped and fled to Asia where later, being in danger of falling into the hands of his relentless enemies, he took poison and died.

For fifty-six years Rome and the shorn city of Carthage were at peace. And meanwhile Rome spread her empire over confused and divided Greece, invaded Asia Minor, and defeated Antiochus III, the Seleucid monarch, at Magnesia in Lydia. She made Egypt, still under the Ptolemies, and Pergamum and most of the small states of Asia Minor into "Allies," or, as we should call them now, "protected states."

Meanwhile Carthage, subjugated and enfeebled, had been slowly regaining something of her former prosperity. Her recovery revived the hate and suspicion of the Romans. She was attacked upon the most shallow and artificial of quarrels (149 B.C.), she made an obstinate and bitter resistance, stood a long siege and was stormed (146 B.C.). The street fighting, or massacre, lasted six days; it was extraordinarily bloody, and when the citadel capitulated only about fifty thousand of the Carthaginian population remained alive out of a quarter of a million. They were sold into slavery, and the city was burnt and elaborately destroyed. The blackened ruins were ploughed and sown as a sort of ceremonial effacement.



So ended the Third Punic War. Of all the Semitic states and cities that had flourished in the world five centuries before only one little country remained free under native rulers. This was Judea, which had liberated itself from the Seleucids and was under the rule of the native Maccabean princes. By this time it had its Bible almost complete, and was developing the distinctive traditions of the Jewish world as we know it now. It was natural that the Carthaginians, Phœnicians and kindred peoples dispersed about the world should find a common link in their practically identical language and in this literature of hope and courage. To a large extent they were still the traders and bankers of the world. The Semitic world had been submerged rather than replaced.

Jerusalem, which has always been rather the symbol than the centre of Judaism, was taken by the Romans in 65 B.C.; and after various vicissitudes of quasi-independence and revolt was besieged by them in A.D. 70 and captured after a stubborn struggle. The temple was destroyed. A later rebellion in A.D. 132 completed its destruction, and the Jerusalem we know to-day was rebuilt later under Roman auspices. A temple to the Roman god, Jupiter Capitolinus, stood in the place of the Temple, and Jews were forbidden to inhabit the city.

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The Growth of the Roman Empire

Now this new Roman power which arose to dominate the western world in the second and first centuries B.C. was in several respects a different thing from any of the great empires that had hitherto prevailed in the civilized world. It was not at first a monarchy, and it was not the creation of any one great conqueror. It was not indeed the first of republican empires; Athens had dominated a group of Allies and dependents in the time of Pericles, and Carthage when she entered upon her fatal struggle with Rome was mistress of Sardinia and Corsica, Morocco, Algiers, Tunis, and most of Spain and Sicily. But it was the first republican empire that escaped extinction and went on to fresh developments.

The centre of this new system lay far to the west of the more ancient centres of empire, which had hitherto been the river valleys of Mesopotamia and Egypt. This westward position enabled Rome to bring in to civilization quite fresh regions and peoples. The Roman power extended to Morocco and Spain, and was presently able to thrust north-westward over what is now France and Belgium to Britain and north-eastward into Hungary and South Russia. But on the other hand it was never able to maintain itself in Central Asia or Persia because they were too far from its administrative centres. It included therefore great masses of fresh Nordic Aryan-speaking peoples, it presently incorporated nearly all the Greek people in the world, and its population was less strongly Hamitic and Semitic than that of any preceding empire.

For some centuries this Roman Empire did not fall into the grooves of precedent that had so speedily swallowed up Persian and Greek, and all that time it developed. The rulers of the Medes and Persians became entirely Babylonized in a generation or so; they took over the tiara of the king of kings and the temples and priesthoods of his gods; Alexander and his successors followed in the same easy path of assimilation; the Seleucid monarchs had much the same court and administrative methods as Nebuchadnezzar; the Ptolemies became Pharaohs and altogether Egyptian. They were assimilated just as before them the Semitic conquerors of the Sumerians had been assimilated. But the Romans ruled in their own city, and for some centuries kept to the laws of their own nature. The only people who exercised any great mental

influence upon them before the second or third century A.D. were the kindred and similar Greeks. So that the Roman Empire was essentially a first attempt to rule a great dominion upon mainly Aryan lines. It was so far a new pattern in history, it was an expanded Aryan republic. The old pattern of a personal conqueror ruling over a capital city that had grown up round the temple of a harvest-god did not apply to it. The Romans had gods and temples, but like the gods of the Greeks their gods were quasi-human immortals, divine patricians. The Romans also had blood sacrifices and even made human ones in times of stress, things they may have learnt to do from their dusky Etruscan teachers; but until Rome was long past its zenith neither priest nor temple played a large part in Roman history.

The Roman Empire was a growth, an unplanned novel growth; the Roman people found themselves engaged almost unawares in a vast administrative experiment. It cannot be called a successful experiment. In the end their empire collapsed altogether. And it changed enormously in form and method from century to century. It changed more in a hundred years than Bengal or Mesopotamia or Egypt changed in a thousand. It was always changing. It never attained to any fixity.

In a sense the experiment failed. In a sense the experiment remains unfinished, and Europe and America to-day are still working out the riddles of world-wide statecraft first confronted by the Roman people.

It is well for the student of history to bear in mind the very great changes not only in political but in social and moral matters that went on throughout the period of Roman dominion. There is much too strong a tendency in people's minds to think of the Roman rule as something finished and stable, firm, rounded, noble and decisive. Macaulay's *Lays of Ancient Rome*, S.P.Q.R., the elder Cato, the Scipios, Julius Cæsar, Diocletian, Constantine the Great, triumphs, orations, gladiatorial combats and Christian martyrs are all mixed up together in a picture of something high and cruel and dignified. The items of that picture have to be disentangled. They are collected at different points from a process of change profounder than that which separates the London of William the Conqueror from the London of to-day.

We may very conveniently divide the expansion of Rome into four stages. The first stage began after the sack of Rome by the Goths in 390 B.C. and went on until the end of the First Punic War (240 B.C,). We may call this stage the stage of the Assimilative Republic. It was perhaps the finest, most characteristic stage in Roman history. The age-long dissensions of patrician and plebeian were drawing to a close, the Etruscan threat had come to an end, no one was very rich yet nor very poor, and

most men were public-spirited. It was a republic like the republic of the South African Boers before 1900 or like the northern states of the American union between 1800 and 1850; a free-farmers' republic. At the outset of this stage Rome was a little state scarcely twenty miles square. She fought the sturdy but kindred states about her, and sought not their destruction but coalescence. Her centuries of civil dissension had trained her people in compromise and concessions. Some of the defeated cities became altogether Roman with a voting share in the government, some became self-governing with the right to trade and marry in Rome; garrisons full of citizens were set up at strategic points and colonies of varied privileges founded among the freshly conquered people. Great roads were made. The rapid Latinization of all Italy was the inevitable consequence of such a policy. In 89 B.C. all the free inhabitants of Italy became citizens of the city of Rome. Formally the whole Roman Empire became at last an extended city. In A.D. 212 every free man in the entire extent of the empire was given citizenship; the right, if he could get there, to vote in the town meeting in Rome.



The forum at Rome as it is to-day

This extension of citizenship to tractable cities and to whole countries was the distinctive device of Roman expansion. It reversed the old process of conquest and assimilation of the conquerors. By the Roman method the conquerors assimilated the conquered.

But after the First Punic War and the annexation of Sicily, though the old process of assimilation still went on, another process arose by its side. Sicily for instance was treated as a conquered prey. It was declared an "estate" of the Roman people. Its rich soil and industrious population were exploited to make Rome rich. The patricians and the more influential among the plebeians secured the major share of that wealth. And the war also brought in a large supply of slaves. Before the First Punic War the population of the republic had been largely a population of citizen farmers. Military service was their privilege and liability. While they were on active service their farms fell into debt and a new large-scale slave agriculture grew up; when they returned they found their produce in competition with slave-grown produce from Sicily and from the new estates at home. Times had changed. The republic had altered its character. Not only was Sicily in the hands of Rome, the common man was in the hands of the rich creditor and the rich competitor. Rome had entered upon its second stage, the Republic of Adventurous Rich Men.

For two hundred years the Roman soldier farmers had struggled for freedom and a share in the government of their state; for a hundred years they had enjoyed their privileges. The First Punic War wasted them and robbed them of all they had won.

The value of their electoral privileges had also evaporated. The governing bodies of the Roman republic were two in number. The first and more important was the Senate. This was a body originally of patricians and then of prominent men of all sorts, who were summoned to it first by certain powerful officials, the consuls and censors. Like the British House of Lords it became a gathering of great landowners, prominent politicians, big business men and the like. It was much more like the British House of Lords than it was like the American Senate. For three centuries, from the Punic Wars onward, it was the centre of Roman political thought and purpose. The second body was the Popular Assembly. This was supposed to be an assembly of *all* the citizens of Rome. When Rome was a little state twenty miles square this was a possible gathering. When the citizenship of Rome had spread beyond the confines in Italy, it was an altogether impossible one. Its meetings, proclaimed by horn-blowing from the Capitol and the city walls, became more and more a gathering of political hacks and city riff-raff. In the fourth century B.C. the Popular Assembly was a considerable check upon

the senate, a competent representation of the claims and rights of the common man. By the end of the Punic Wars it was an impotent relic of a vanquished popular control. No effectual legal check remained upon the big men.

Nothing of the nature of representative government was ever introduced into the Roman republic. No one thought of electing delegates to represent the will of the citizens. This is a very important point for the student to grasp. The Popular Assembly never became the equivalent of the American House of Representatives or the British House of Commons. In theory it was all the citizens; in practice it ceased to be anything at all worth consideration.

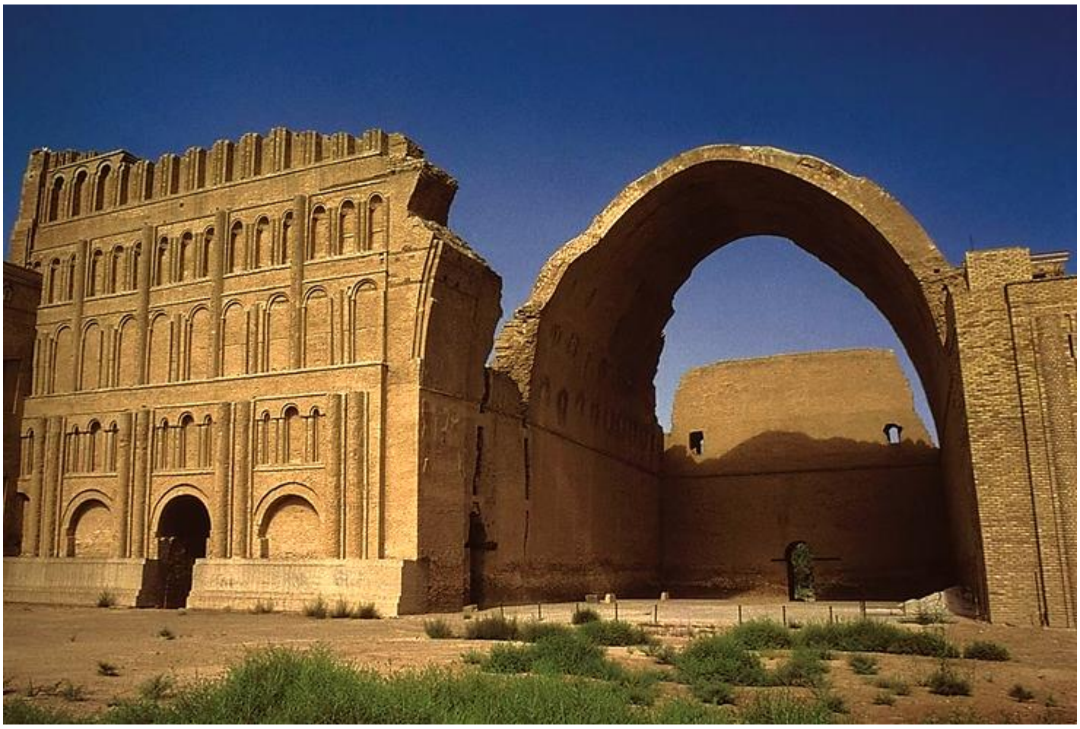


Relics of Roman rule.
Ruins of Coliseum in Tunis

The common citizen of the Roman Empire was therefore in a very poor case after the Second Punic War; he was impoverished, he had often lost his farm, he was ousted from profitable production by slaves, and he had no political power left to him to

remedy these things. The only methods of popular expression left to a people without any form of political expression are the strike and the revolt. The story of the second and first centuries B.C., so far as internal politics go, is a story of futile revolutionary upheaval. The scale of this history will not permit us to tell of the intricate struggles of that time, of the attempts to break up estates and restore the land to the free farmer, of proposals to abolish debts in whole or in part. There was revolt and civil war. In 73 B.C., the distresses of Italy were enhanced by a great insurrection of the slaves under Spartacus. The slaves of Italy revolted with some effect, for among them were the trained fighters of the gladiatorial shows. For two years Spartacus held out in the crater of Vesuvius, which seemed at that time to be an extinct volcano. This insurrection was defeated at last and suppressed with frantic cruelty. Six thousand captured Spartacists were crucified along the Appian Way, the great highway that runs southward out of Rome (71 B.C.).

The common man never made head against the forces that were subjugating and degrading him. But the big rich men who were overcoming him, were even in his defeat preparing a new power in the Roman world over themselves and him, the power of the army.



The great Roman Arch at Ctesiphon near Bagdad

Before the Second Punic War the army of Rome was a levy of free farmers, who, according to their quality, rode or marched afoot to battle. This was a very good force for wars close at hand, but not the sort of army that will go abroad and bear long campaigns with patience. And moreover as the slaves multiplied and the estates grew, the supply of free-spirited fighting farmers declined. It was a popular leader named Marius who introduced a new factor. North Africa after the overthrow of the Carthaginian civilization had become a semi-barbaric kingdom, the kingdom of Numidia. The Roman power fell into conflict with Jugurtha, king of this state, and experienced enormous difficulties in subduing him. Marius was made consul in a phase of public indignation, to end this discreditable war. This he did by raising *paid troops* and drilling them hard. Jugurtha was brought in chains to Rome (106 B.C.) and Marius, when his time of office had expired, held on to his consulship illegally with his newly created legions. There was no power in Rome to restrain him.

With Marius began the third phase in the development of the Roman power, the Republic of the Military Commanders. For now began a period in which the leaders of the paid legions fought for the mastery of the Roman world. Against Marius was pitted the aristocratic Sulla who had served under him in Africa. Each in turn made a great massacre of his political opponents. Men were proscribed and executed by the thousand, and their estates were sold. After the bloody rivalry of these two and the horror of the revolt of Spartacus, came a phase in which Lucullus and Pompey the Great and Crassus and Julius Cæsar were the masters of armies and dominated affairs. It was Crassus who defeated Spartacus. Lucullus conquered Asia Minor and penetrated to Armenia, and retired with great wealth into private life. Crassus, thrusting farther, invaded Persia and was defeated and slain by the Parthians. After a long rivalry Pompey was defeated by Julius Cæsar (48 B.C.) and murdered in Egypt, leaving Julius Cæsar sole master of the Roman world.

The figure of Julius Cæsar is one that has stirred the human imagination out of all proportion to its merit or true importance. He has become a legend and a symbol. For us he is chiefly important as marking the transition from the phase of military adventurers to the beginning of the fourth stage in Roman expansion, the Early Empire. For in spite of the profoundest economic and political convulsions, in spite of civil war and social degeneration, throughout all this time the boundaries of the Roman state crept outward and continued to creep outward to their maximum about A.D. 100. There had been something like an ebb during the doubtful phases of the Second Punic War, and again a manifest loss of vigour before the reconstruction of the

army by Marius. The revolt of Spartacus marked a third phase. Julius Cæsar made his reputation as a military leader in Gaul, which is now France and Belgium. (The chief tribes inhabiting this country belonged to the same Celtic people as the Gauls who had occupied north Italy for a time, and who had afterwards raided into Asia Minor and settled down as the Galatians.) Cæsar drove back a German invasion of Gaul and added all that country to the empire, and he twice crossed the Straits of Dover into Britain (55 and 54 B.C.) where however he made no permanent conquest. Meanwhile Pompey the Great was consolidating Roman conquests that reached in the east to the Caspian Sea.



The Column of Trajan at Rome.
Representing his conquests in Dacia and elsewhere.

At this time, the middle of the first century B.C., the Roman senate was still the nominal centre of the Roman government, appointing consuls and other officials, granting powers and the like; and a number of politicians, among whom Cicero was an outstanding figure, were struggling to preserve the great traditions of republican Rome and to maintain respect for its laws. But the spirit of citizenship had gone from Italy with the wasting away of the free farmers; it was a land now of slaves and impoverished men with neither the understanding nor the desire for freedom. There was nothing whatever behind these republican leaders in the senate, while behind the great adventurers they feared and desired to control were the legions. Over the heads of the senate Crassus and Pompey and Cæsar divided the rule of the Empire between them (The First Triumvirate). When presently Crassus was killed at distant Carrhæ by the Parthians, Pompey and Cæsar fell out. Pompey took up the republican side, and laws were passed to bring Cæsar to trial for his breaches of law and his disobedience to the decrees of the senate.

It was illegal for a general to bring his troops out of the boundary of his command, and the boundary between Cæsar's command and Italy was the Rubicon. In 49 B.C. he crossed the Rubicon, saying "The die is cast" and marched upon Pompey and Rome.

It had been the custom in Rome in the past, in periods of military extremity, to elect a "dictator" with practically unlimited powers to rule through the crisis. After his overthrow of Pompey, Cæsar was made dictator first for ten years and then (in 45 B.C.) for life. In effect he was made monarch of the empire for life. There was talk of a king, a word abhorrent to Rome since the expulsion of the Etruscans five centuries before. Cæsar refused to be King, but adopted throne and sceptre. After his defeat of Pompey, Cæsar had gone on into Egypt and had made love to Cleopatra, the last of the Ptolemies, the goddess queen of Egypt. She seems to have turned his head very completely. He had brought back to Rome the Egyptian idea of a god-king. His statue was set up in a temple with an inscription "To the Unconquerable God." The expiring republicanism of Rome flared up in a last protest, and Cæsar was stabbed to death in the senate at the foot of the statue of his murdered rival, Pompey the Great.

Thirteen years more of this conflict of ambitious personalities followed. There was a second Triumvirate of Lepidus, Mark Antony and Octavian Cæsar, the latter the nephew of Julius Cæsar. Octavian like his uncle took the poorer, hardier western provinces where the best legions were recruited. In 31 B.C., he defeated Mark Antony, his only serious rival, at the naval battle of Actium, and made himself sole master of

the Roman world. But Octavian was a man of different quality altogether from Julius Cæsar. He had no foolish craving to be God or King. He had no queen-lover that he wished to dazzle. He restored freedom to the senate and people of Rome. He declined to be dictator. The grateful senate in return gave him the reality instead of the forms of power. He was to be called not King indeed, but "Princeps" and "Augustus." He became Augustus Cæsar, the first of the Roman emperors (27 B.C. to A.D.14).

He was followed by Tiberius Cæsar (A.D. 14 to 37) and he by others, Caligula, Claudius, Nero and so on up to Trajan (A.D. 98), Hadrian (A.D. 117), Antonius Pius (A.D. 138) and Marcus Aurelius (A.D. 161-180). All these emperors were emperors of the legions. The soldiers made them, and some the soldiers destroyed. Gradually the senate fades out of Roman history, and the emperor and his administrative officials replace it. The boundaries of the empire crept forward now to their utmost limits. Most of Britain was added to the empire, Transylvania was brought in as a new province, Dacia; Trajan crossed the Euphrates. Hadrian had an idea that reminds us at once of what had happened at the other end of the old world. Like Shi-Hwang-ti he built walls against the northern barbarians; one across Britain and a palisade between the Rhine and the Danube. He abandoned some of the acquisitions of Trajan.

The expansion of the Roman Empire was at an end.

34

Between Rome and China

The second and first centuries B.C. mark a new phase in the history of mankind. Mesopotamia and the eastern Mediterranean are no longer the centre of interest. Both Mesopotamia and Egypt were still fertile, populous and fairly prosperous, but they were no longer the dominant regions of the world. Power had drifted to the west and to the east. Two great empires now dominated the world, this new Roman Empire and the renascent Empire of China. Rome extended its power to the Euphrates, but it was never able to get beyond that boundary. It was too remote. Beyond the Euphrates the former Persian and Indian dominions of the Seleucids fell under a number of new masters. China, now under the Han dynasty, which had replaced the Ts'in dynasty at the death of Shi-Hwang-ti, had extended its power across Tibet and over the high mountain passes of the Pamirs into western Turkestan. But there too it reached its extremes. Beyond was too far.

China at this time was the greatest, best organized and most civilized political system in the world. It was superior in area and population to the Roman Empire at its zenith. It was possible then for these two vast systems to flourish in the same world at the same time in almost complete ignorance of each other. The means of communication both by sea and land was not yet sufficiently developed and organized for them to come to a direct clash.

Yet they reacted upon each other in a very remarkable way, and their influence upon the fate of the regions that lay between them, upon central Asia and India, was profound. A certain amount of trade trickled through, by camel caravans across Persia, for example, and by coasting ships by way of India and the Red Sea. In 66 B.C. Roman troops under Pompey followed in the footsteps of Alexander the Great, and marched up the eastern shores of the Caspian Sea. In A.D. 102 a Chinese expeditionary force under Pan Chau reached the Caspian, and sent emissaries to report upon the power of Rome. But many centuries were still to pass before definite knowledge and direct intercourse were to link the great parallel worlds of Europe and Eastern Asia.

To the north of both these great empires were barbaric wildernesses. What is now Germany was largely forest lands; the forests extended far into Russia and made a

home for the gigantic aurochs, a bull of almost elephantine size. Then to the north of the great mountain masses of Asia stretched a band of deserts, steppes and then forests and frozen lands. In the eastward lap of the elevated part of Asia was the great triangle of Manchuria. Large parts of these regions, stretching between South Russia and Turkestan into Manchuria, were and are regions of exceptional climatic insecurity. Their rainfall has varied greatly in the course of a few centuries. They are lands treacherous to man. For years they will carry pasture and sustain cultivation, and then will come an age of decline in humidity and a cycle of killing droughts.



A Chinese covered jar of green-glazed earthenware.
Han Dynasty (contemporary with late Roman republic and early Empire).
(In the Victoria and Albert Museum)

The western part of this barbaric north from the German forests to South Russia and Turkestan and from Gothland to the Alps was the region of origin of the Nordic peoples and of the Aryan speech. The eastern steppes and deserts of Mongolia was the region of origin of the Hunnish or Mongolian or Tartar or Turkish peoples—for all these several peoples were akin in language, race, and way of life. And as the Nordic peoples seem to have been continually overflowing their own borders and pressing south upon the developing civilizations of Mesopotamia and the Mediterranean coast, so the Hunnish tribes sent their surplus as wanderers, raiders and conquerors into the settled regions of China. Periods of plenty in the north would mean an increase in population there; a shortage of grass, a spell of cattle disease, would drive the hungry warlike tribesmen south.

For a time there were simultaneously two fairly effective Empires in the world capable of holding back the barbarians and even forcing forward the frontiers of the imperial peace. The thrust of the Han empire from north China into Mongolia was strong and continuous. The Chinese population welled up over the barrier of the Great Wall. Behind the imperial frontier guards came the Chinese farmer with horse and plough, ploughing up the grass lands and enclosing the winter pasture. The Hunnish peoples raided and murdered the settlers, but the Chinese punitive expeditions were too much for them. The nomads were faced with the choice of settling down to the plough and becoming Chinese tax-payers or shifting in search of fresh summer pastures. Some took the former course and were absorbed. Some drifted north-eastward and eastward over the mountain passes down into western Turkestan.



Vase of bronze form, unglazed stoneware.
Han Dynasty (206 B.C.—A.D. 220).
(In the Victoria and Albert Museum)

This westward drive of the Mongolian horsemen was going on from 200 B.C. onward. It was producing a westward pressure upon the Aryan tribes, and these again were pressing upon the Roman frontiers ready to break through directly

there was any weakness apparent. The Parthians, who were apparently a Scythian people with some Mongolian admixture, came down to the Euphrates by the first century B.C. They fought against Pompey the Great in his eastern raid. They defeated and killed Crassus. They replaced the Seleucid monarchy in Persia by a dynasty of Parthian kings, the Arsacid dynasty.



Chinese vessel in bronze, in form of a goose.
Dating from before the time of Shi Hwang Ti. Such a piece of work indicates a high level of comfort and humour.
(In the Victoria and Albert Museum)

But for a time the line of least resistance for hungry nomads lay neither to the west nor the east but through central Asia and then south-eastward through the Khyber Pass into India. It was India which received the Mongolian drive in these centuries of Roman and Chinese strength. A series of raiding conquerors poured down through the Punjab into the great plains to loot and destroy. The empire of Asoka was broken up, and for a time the history of India passes into darkness. A certain Kushan dynasty founded by the "Indo-Scythians"—one of the raiding peoples—ruled for a time over North India and maintained a certain order. These invasions went on for several centuries. For a large part of the fifth century A.D. India was afflicted by the Ephthalites or White Huns, who levied tribute on the small Indian princes and held India in terror. Every summer these Ephthalites pastured in western Turkestan, every autumn they came down through the passes to terrorize India.

In the second century A.D. a great misfortune came upon the Roman and Chinese empires that probably weakened the resistance of both to barbarian pressure. This was a pestilence of unexampled virulence. It raged for eleven years in China and disorganized the social framework profoundly. The Han dynasty fell, and a new age of division and confusion began from which China did not fairly recover until the seventh century A.D. with the coming of the great Tang dynasty.

The infection spread through Asia to Europe. It raged throughout the Roman Empire from A.D. 164 to 180. It evidently weakened the Roman imperial fabric very seriously. We begin to hear of depopulation in the Roman provinces after this, and there was a marked deterioration in the vigour and efficiency of government. At any rate we presently find the frontier no longer invulnerable, but giving way first in this place and then in that. A new Nordic people, the Goths, coming originally from Gothland in Sweden, had migrated across Russia to the Volga region and the shores of the Black Sea and taken to the sea and piracy. By the end of the second century they may have begun to feel the westward thrust of the Huns. In 247 they crossed the Danube in a great land raid, and defeated and killed the Emperor Decius in a battle in what is now Serbia. In 236 another Germanic people, the Franks, had broken bounds upon the Lower Rhine, and the Alemanni had poured into Alsace. The legions in Gaul beat back their invaders, but the Goths in the Balkan peninsula raided again and again. The province of Dacia vanished from Roman history.

A chill had come to the pride and confidence of Rome. In 270-275 Rome, which had been an open and secure city for three centuries, was fortified by the Emperor Aurelian.

35

The Common Man's Life under the Early Roman Empire

Before we tell of how this Roman empire which was built up in the two centuries B.C., and which flourished in peace and security from the days of Augustus Cæsar onward for two centuries, fell into disorder and was broken up, it may be as well to devote some attention to the life of the ordinary people throughout this great realm. Our history has come down now to within 2000 years of our own time; and the life of the civilized people, both under the Peace of Rome and the Peace of the Han dynasty, was beginning to resemble more and more clearly the life of their civilized successors to-day.

In the western world coined money was now in common use; outside the priestly world there were many people of independent means who were neither officials of the government nor priests; people travelled about more freely than they had ever done before, and there were high roads and inns for them. Compared with the past, with the time before 500 B.C., life had become much more loose. Before that date civilized men had been bound to a district or country, had been bound to a tradition and lived within a very limited horizon; only the nomads traded and travelled.

But neither the Roman Peace nor the Peace of the Han dynasty meant a uniform civilization over the large areas they controlled. There were very great local differences and great contrasts and inequalities of culture between one district and another, just as there are to-day under the British Peace in India. The Roman garrisons and colonies were dotted here and there over this great space, worshipping Roman gods and speaking the Latin language; but where there had been towns and cities before the coming of the Romans, they went on, subordinated indeed but managing their own affairs, and, for a time at least, worshipping their own gods in their own fashion. Over Greece, Asia Minor, Egypt and the Hellenized East generally, the Latin language never prevailed. Greek ruled there invincibly. Saul of Tarsus, who became the apostle Paul, was a Jew and a Roman citizen; but he spoke and wrote Greek and not Hebrew. Even at the court of the Parthian dynasty, which had overthrown the Greek Seleucids in Persia, and was quite outside the Roman imperial boundaries, Greek was the fashionable language. In some parts of Spain and in North Africa, the Carthaginian language also held on for a long time in spite of the destruction of

Carthage. Such a town as Seville, which had been a prosperous city long before the Roman name had been heard of, kept its Semitic goddess and preserved its Semitic speech for generations, in spite of a colony of Roman veterans at Italica a few miles away. Septimius Severus, who was emperor from 193 to 211 A.D. spoke Carthaginian as his mother speech. He learnt Latin later as a foreign tongue; and it is recorded that his sister never learnt Latin and conducted her Roman household in the Punic language.



Fragment of decorated glass (Early Empire)
(A Contemporary representation of a Gladiator)

In such countries as Gaul and Britain and in provinces like Dacia (now roughly Roumania) and Pannonia (Hungary south of the Danube), where there were no pre-existing great cities and temples and cultures, the Roman empire did however

"Latinize." It civilized these countries for the first time. It created cities and towns where Latin was from the first the dominant speech, and where Roman gods were served and Roman customs and fashions followed. The Roumanian, Italian, French and Spanish languages, all variations and modifications of Latin, remain to remind us of this extension of Latin speech and customs. North-west Africa also became at last largely Latin-speaking. Egypt, Greece and the rest of the empire to the east were never Latinized. They remained Egyptian and Greek in culture and spirit. And even in Rome, among educated men, Greek was learnt as the language of a gentleman and Greek literature and learning were very properly preferred to Latin.

In this miscellaneous empire the ways of doing work and business were naturally also very miscellaneous. The chief industry of the settled world was still largely agriculture. We have told how in Italy the sturdy free farmers who were the backbone of the early Roman republic were replaced by estates worked by slave labour after the Punic wars. The Greek world had had very various methods of cultivation, from the Arcadian plan, wherein every free citizen toiled with his own hands, to Sparta, wherein it was a dishonour to work and where agricultural work was done by a special slave class, the Helots. But that was ancient history now, and over most of the Hellenized world the estate system and slave-gangs had spread. The agricultural slaves were captives who spoke many different languages so that they could not understand each other, or they were born slaves; they had no solidarity to resist oppression, no tradition of rights, no knowledge, for they could not read and write. Although they came to form a majority of the country population they never made a successful insurrection. The insurrection of Spartacus in the first century B.C. was an insurrection of the special slaves who were trained for the gladiatorial combats. The agricultural workers in Italy in the latter days of the Republic and the early Empire suffered frightful indignities; they would be chained at night to prevent escape or have half the head shaved to make it difficult. They had no wives of their own; they could be outraged, mutilated and killed by their masters. A master could sell his slave to fight beasts in the arena. If a slave slew his master, all the slaves in his household and not merely the murderer, were crucified. In some parts of Greece, in Athens notably, the lot of the slave was never quite so frightful as this, but it was still detestable. To such a population the barbarian invaders who presently broke through the defensive line of the legions, came not as enemies but as liberators.



Ruins of a street in Pompeii.
The former Brighton of Rome. Note the ruts in roadway worn by chariot wheels.

The slave system had spread to most industries and to every sort of work that could be done by gangs. Mines and metallurgical operations, the rowing of galleys, road-making and big building operations were all largely slave occupations. And almost all domestic service was performed by slaves. There were poor free-men and there were freed-men in the cities and upon the country side, working for themselves or even working for wages. They were artizans, supervisors and so forth, workers of a new money-paid class working in competition with slave workers; but we do not know what proportion they made of the general population. It probably varied widely in different places and at different periods. And there were also many modifications of slavery, from the slave that was chained at night and driven with whips to the farm or quarry, to the slave whose master found it advantageous to leave him to cultivate his patch or work his craft and own his wife like a free-man, provided he paid in a satisfactory quittance to his owner.

There were armed slaves. At the opening of the period of the Punic wars, in 264 B.C., the Etruscan sport of setting slaves to fight for their lives was revived in Rome. It grew rapidly fashionable; and soon every great Roman rich man kept a

retinue of gladiators, who sometimes fought in the arena but whose real business it was to act as his bodyguard of bullies. And also there were learned slaves. The conquests of the later Republic were among the highly civilized cities of Greece, North Africa, and Asia Minor; and they brought in many highly educated captives. The tutor of a young Roman of good family was usually a slave. A rich man would have a Greek slave as librarian, and slave secretaries and learned men. He would keep his poet as he would keep a performing dog. In this atmosphere of slavery the traditions of modern literary scholarship and criticism, meticulous, timid and quarrelsome, were evolved. There were enterprising people who bought intelligent boy slaves and had them educated for sale. Slaves were trained as book copyists, as jewellers, and for endless skilled callings.



The Coliseum, Rome

But there were very considerable changes in the position of a slave during the four hundred years between the opening days of conquest under the republic of rich men and the days of disintegration that followed the great pestilence. In the second

century B.C. war-captives were abundant, manners gross and brutal; the slave had no rights and there was scarcely an outrage the reader can imagine that was not practised upon slaves in those days. But already in the first century A.D. there was a perceptible improvement in the attitude of the Roman civilization towards slavery. Captives were not so abundant for one thing, and slaves were dearer. And slave- owners began to realize that the profit and comfort they got from their slaves increased with the self-respect of these unfortunates. But also the moral tone of the community was rising, and a sense of justice was becoming effective. The higher mentality of Greece was qualifying the old Roman harshness. Restrictions upon cruelty were made, a master might no longer sell his slave to fight beasts, a slave was given property rights in what was called his *peculium*, slaves were paid wages as an encouragement and stimulus, a form of slave marriage was recognized. Very many forms of agriculture do not lend themselves to gang working, or require gang workers only at certain seasons. In regions where such conditions prevailed the slave presently became a serf, paying his owner part of his produce or working for him at certain seasons.



Interior of the Coliseum

When we begin to realize how essentially this great Latin and Greek-speaking Roman Empire of the first two centuries A.D. was a slave state and how small was the minority who had any pride or freedom in their lives, we lay our hands on the clues to its decay and collapse. There was little of what we should call family life, few homes of temperate living and active thought and study; schools and colleges were few and far between. The free will and the free mind were nowhere to be found. The great roads, the ruins of splendid buildings, the tradition of law and power it left for the astonishment of succeeding generations must not conceal from us that all its outer splendour was built upon thwarted wills, stifled intelligence, and crippled and perverted desires. And even the minority who lorded it over that wide realm of subjugation and of restraint and forced labour were uneasy and unhappy in their souls; art and literature, science and philosophy, which are the fruits of free and happy minds, waned in that atmosphere. There was much copying and imitation, an abundance of artistic artificers, much slavish pedantry among the servile men of learning, but the whole Roman empire in four centuries produced nothing to set beside the bold and noble intellectual activities of the comparatively little city of Athens during its one century of greatness. Athens decayed under the Roman sceptre. The science of Alexandria decayed. The spirit of man, it seemed, was decaying in those days.

36

Religious Developments under the Roman Empire

The soul of man under that Latin and Greek empire of the first two centuries of the Christian era was a worried and frustrated soul. Compulsion and cruelty reigned; there were pride and display but little honour; little serenity or steadfast happiness. The unfortunate were despised and wretched; the fortunate were insecure and feverishly eager for gratifications. In a great number of cities life centred on the red excitement of the arena, where men and beasts fought and were tormented and slain. Amphitheatres are the most characteristic of Roman ruins. Life went on in that key. The uneasiness of men's hearts manifested itself in profound religious unrest.

From the days when the Aryan hordes first broke in upon the ancient civilizations, it was inevitable that the old gods of the temples and priesthoods should suffer great adaptations or disappear. In the course of hundreds of generations the agricultural peoples of the brunet civilizations had shaped their lives and thoughts to the temple-centred life. Observances and the fear of disturbed routines, sacrifices and mysteries, dominated their minds. Their gods seem monstrous and illogical to our modern minds because we belong to an Aryanized world, but to these older peoples these deities had the immediate conviction and vividness of things seen in an intense dream. The conquest of one city state by another in Sumeria or early Egypt meant a change or a renaming of gods or goddesses, but left the shape and spirit of the worship intact. There was no change in its general character. The figures in the dream changed, but the dream went on and it was the same sort of dream. And the early Semitic conquerors were sufficiently akin in spirit to the Sumerians to take over the religion of the Mesopotamian civilization they subjugated without any profound alteration. Egypt was never indeed subjugated to the extent of a religious revolution. Under the Ptolemies and under the Cæsars, her temples and altars and priesthoods remained essentially Egyptian.

So long as conquests went on between people of similar social and religious habits it was possible to get over the clash between the god of this temple and region and the god of that by a process of grouping or assimilation. If the two gods were alike in character they were identified. It was really the same god under another name, said the priests and the people. This fusion of gods is called theocrasia; and the age of the

great conquests of the thousand years B.C. was an age of theocrasia. Over wide areas the local gods were displaced by, or rather they were swallowed up in, a general god. So that when at last Hebrew prophets in Babylon proclaimed one God of Righteousness in all the earth men's minds were fully prepared for that idea.

But often the gods were too dissimilar for such an assimilation, and then they were grouped together in some plausible relationship. A female god — and the Ægean world before the coming of the Greek was much addicted to Mother Gods—would be married to a male god, and an animal god or a star god would be humanized and the animal or astronomical aspect, the serpent or the sun or the star, made into an ornament or a symbol. Or the god of a defeated people would become a malignant antagonist to the brighter gods. The history of theology is full of such adaptations, compromises, and rationalizations of once local gods.

As Egypt developed from city states into one united kingdom there was much of this theocrasia. The chief god so to speak was Osiris, a sacrificial harvest god of whom Pharaoh was supposed to be the earthly incarnation. Osiris was represented as repeatedly dying and rising again; he was not only the seed and the harvest but also by a natural extension of thought the means of human immortality. Among his symbols was the wide-winged scarabeus beetle which buries its eggs to rise again, and also the effulgent sun which sets to rise. Later on he was to be identified with Apis, the sacred bull. Associated with him was the goddess Isis. Isis was also Hathor, a cow-goddess, and the crescent moon and the Star of the sea. Osiris dies and she bears a child, Horus, who is also a hawk-god and the dawn, and who grows to become Osiris again. The effigies of Isis represent her as bearing the infant Horus in her arms and standing on the crescent moon. These are not logical relationships, but they were devised by the human mind before the development of hard and systematic thinking and they have a dream-like coherence. Beneath this triple group there are other and darker Egyptian gods, bad gods, the dog-headed Anubis, black night and the like, devourers, tempters, enemies of god and man.



Mithras sacrificing a bull (Roman)
(In the British Museum)

Every religious system does in the course of time fit itself to the shape of the human soul, and there can be no doubt that out of these illogical and even uncouth symbols, Egyptian people were able to fashion for themselves ways of genuine devotion and consolation. The desire for immortality was very strong in the Egyptian mind, and the religious life of Egypt turned on that desire. The Egyptian religion was an immortality religion as no other religion had ever been. As Egypt went down under foreign conquerors and the Egyptian gods ceased to have any satisfactory political significance, this craving for a life of compensations hereafter, intensified.



Isis and Horus.
An Egyptian statuette of the XIX Dynasty.
(In the British Museum)

After the Greek conquest, the new city of Alexandria became the centre of Egyptian religious life, and indeed of the religious life of the whole Hellenic world. A great temple, the Serapeum, was set up by Ptolemy I at which a sort of trinity of gods was worshipped. These were Serapis (who was Osiris-Apis rechristened), Isis and Horus. These were not regarded as separate gods but as three aspects of one god, and Serapis was identified with the Greek Zeus, the Roman Jupiter and the Persian sun-god. This worship spread wherever the Hellenic influence extended, even into North India and Western China. The idea of immortality, an immortality of compensations and consolation, was eagerly received by a world in which the common life was hopelessly wretched. Serapis was called "the saviour of souls." "After death," said the hymns of that time, "we are still in the care of his providence." Isis attracted many devotees. Her images stood in her temples, as Queen of Heaven, bearing the infant Horus in her arms. Candles were burnt before her, votive offerings were made to her, shaven priests consecrated to celibacy, waited on her altar.

The rise of the Roman empire opened the western European world to this growing cult. The temples of Serapis-Isis, the chanting of the priests and the hope of immortal life, followed the Roman standards to Scotland and Holland. But there were many rivals to the Serapis-Isis religion. Prominent among these was Mithraism. This

was a religion of Persian origin, and it centred upon some now forgotten mysteries about Mithras sacrificing a sacred and benevolent bull. Here we seem to have something more primordial than the complicated and sophisticated Serapis-Isis beliefs. We are carried back directly to the blood sacrifices of the heliolithic stage in human culture. The bull upon the Mithraic monuments always bleeds copiously from a wound in its side, and from this blood springs new life. The votary to Mithraism actually bathed in the blood of the sacrificial bull. At his initiation he went beneath a scaffolding upon which a bull was killed so that the blood could actually run down on him.

Both these religions, and the same is true of many other of the numerous parallel cults that sought the allegiance of the slaves and citizens under the earlier Roman emperors, are personal religions. They aim at personal salvation and personal immortality. The older religions were not personal like that; they were social. The older fashion of divinity was god or goddess of the city first or of the state, and only secondarily of the individual. The sacrifices were a public and not a private function. They concerned collective practical needs in this world in which we live. But the Greeks first and now the Romans had pushed religion out of politics. Guided by the Egyptian tradition religion had retreated to the other world.



Bust of the Emperor Commodus, A.D. 180-192.
Represented as the God Mithras (Roman), circa A.D. 190.
(In the British Museum)

These new private immortality religions took all the heart and emotion out of the old state religions, but they did not actually replace them. A typical city under the earlier Roman emperors would have a number of temples to all sorts of gods. There might be a temple to Jupiter of the Capitol, the great god of Rome, and there would probably be one to the reigning Cæsar. For the Cæsars had learnt from the Pharaohs the possibility of being gods. In such temples a cold and stately political worship went on; one would go and make an offering and burn a pinch of incense to show one's loyalty. But it would be to the temple of Isis, the dear Queen of Heaven, one would go with the burthen of one's private troubles for advice and relief. There might be local and eccentric gods. Seville, for example, long affected the worship of the old Carthaginian Venus. In a cave or an underground temple there would certainly be an altar to Mithras, attended by legionaries and slaves. And probably also there would be a synagogue where the Jews gathered to read their Bible and uphold their faith in the unseen God of all the Earth. Sometimes there would be trouble with the Jews about the political side of the state religion. They held that their God was a jealous God intolerant of idolatry, and they would refuse to take part in the public sacrifices to Cæsar. They would not even salute the Roman standards for fear of idolatry.

In the East long before the time of Buddha there had been ascetics, men and women who gave up most of the delights of life, who repudiated marriage and property and sought spiritual powers and an escape from the stresses and mortifications of the world in abstinence, pain, and solitude. Buddha himself set his face against ascetic extravagances, but many of his disciples followed a monkish life of great severity. Obscure Greek cults practised similar disciplines even to the extent of self-mutilation. Asceticism appeared in the Jewish communities of Judea and Alexandria also in the first century B.C. Communities of men abandoned the world and gave themselves to austerities and mystical contemplation. Such was the sect of the Essenes. Throughout the first and second centuries A.D. there was an almost world-wide resort to such repudiations of life, a universal search for "salvation" from the distresses of the time. The old sense of an established order, the old confidence in priest and temple and law and custom, had gone. Amidst the prevailing slavery, cruelty, fear, anxiety, waste, display and hectic self-indulgence, went this epidemic of self-disgust and mental insecurity, this agonized search for peace even at the price of renunciation and voluntary suffering. This it was that filled the Serapeum with weeping penitents and brought the converts into the gloom and gore of the Mithraic cave.

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The Teaching of Jesus

It was while Augustus Cæsar, the first of the Emperors, was reigning in Rome that Jesus who is the Christ of Christianity was born in Judea. In his name a religion was to arise which was destined to become the official religion of the entire Roman Empire.

Now it is on the whole more convenient to keep history and theology apart. A large proportion of the Christian world believes that Jesus was an incarnation of that God of all the Earth whom the Jews first recognized. The historian, if he is to remain historian, can neither accept nor deny that interpretation. Materially Jesus appeared in the likeness of a man, and it is as a man that the historian must deal with him.

He appeared in Judea in the reign of Tiberius Cæsar. He was a prophet. He preached after the fashion of the preceding Jewish prophets. He was a man of about thirty, and we are in the profoundest ignorance of his manner of life before his preaching began.

Our only direct sources of information about the life and teaching of Jesus are the four Gospels. All four agree in giving us a picture of a very definite personality. One is obliged to say, "Here was a man. This could not have been invented."

But just as the personality of Gautama Buddha has been distorted and obscured by the stiff squatting figure, the gilded idol of later Buddhism, so one feels that the lean and strenuous personality of Jesus is much wronged by the unreality and conventionality that a mistaken reverence has imposed upon his figure in modern Christian art. Jesus was a penniless teacher, who wandered about the dusty sun-bit country of Judea, living upon casual gifts of food; yet he is always represented clean, combed, and sleek, in spotless raiment, erect and with something motionless about him as though he was gliding through the air. This alone has made him unreal and incredible to many people who cannot distinguish the core of the story from the ornamental and unwise additions of the unintelligently devout.

We are left, if we do strip this record of these difficult accessories, with the figure of a being, very human, very earnest and passionate, capable of swift anger, and teaching a new and simple and profound doctrine—namely, the universal loving Fatherhood of God and the coming of the Kingdom of Heaven. He was clearly a

person—to use a common phrase—of intense personal magnetism. He attracted followers and filled them with love and courage. Weak and ailing people were heartened and healed by his presence. Yet he was probably of a delicate physique, because of the swiftness with which he died under the pains of crucifixion. There is a tradition that he fainted when, according to the custom, he was made to bear his cross to the place of execution. He went about the country for three years spreading his doctrine and then he came to Jerusalem and was accused of trying to set up a strange kingdom in Judea; he was tried upon this charge, and crucified together with two thieves. Long before these two were dead his sufferings were over.

The doctrine of the Kingdom of Heaven, which was the main teaching of Jesus, is certainly one of the most revolutionary doctrines that ever stirred and changed human thought. It is small wonder if the world of that time failed to grasp its full significance, and recoiled in dismay from even a half apprehension of its tremendous challenges to the established habits and institutions of mankind. For the doctrine of the Kingdom of Heaven, as Jesus seems to have preached it, was no less than a bold and uncompromising demand for a complete change and cleansing of the life of our struggling race, an utter cleansing, without and within. To the gospels the reader must go for all that is preserved of this tremendous teaching; here we are only concerned with the jar of its impact upon established ideas.

The Jews were persuaded that God, the one God of the whole world, was a righteous god, but they also thought of him as a trading god who had made a bargain with their Father Abraham about them, a very good bargain indeed for them, to bring them at last to predominance in the earth. With dismay and anger they heard Jesus sweeping away their dear securities. God, he taught, was no bargainer; there were no chosen people and no favourites in the Kingdom of Heaven. God was the loving father of all life, as incapable of showing favour as the universal sun. And all men were brothers—sinners alike and alike beloved sons of this divine father. In the parable of the Good Samaritan Jesus cast scorn upon that natural tendency we all obey, to glorify our own people and to minimize the righteousness of other creeds and other races. In the parable of the labourers he thrust aside the obstinate claim of the Jews to have a special claim upon God. All whom God takes into the kingdom, he taught, God serves alike; there is no distinction in his treatment, because there is no measure to his bounty. From all, moreover, as the parable of the buried talent witnesses, and as the incident of the widow's mite enforces, he demands the utmost. There are no privileges, no rebates and no excuses in the Kingdom of Heaven.



Early ideal portrait, in gilded glass, of Jesus Christ, in which the traditional beard is not shown.

But it is not only the intense tribal patriotism of the Jews that Jesus outraged. They were a people of intense family loyalty, and he would have swept away all the narrow and restrictive family affections in the great flood of the love of God. The whole kingdom of Heaven was to be the family of his followers. We are told that, "While he yet talked to the people, behold, his mother and his brethren stood without, desiring to speak with him. Then one said unto him, Behold, thy mother and thy brethren stand without, desiring to speak with thee. But he answered and said unto him that told him, Who is my mother? and who are my brethren? And he stretched forth his hands towards his disciples, and said, Behold my mother and my brethren! For whosoever shall do the will of my Father which is in heaven, the same is my brother, and sister, and mother."[1]

[1] Matt. xii, 46-50



The road from Nazareth to Tiberias

And not only did Jesus strike at patriotism and the bonds of family loyalty in the name of God's universal fatherhood and brotherhood of all mankind, but it is clear that his teaching condemned all the gradations of the economic system, all private wealth, and personal advantages. All men belonged to the kingdom; all their possessions belonged to the kingdom; the righteous life for all men, the only righteous life, was the service of God's will with all that we had, with all that we were. Again and again he denounced private riches and the reservation of any private life.



David's Tower and Wall of Jerusalem

"And when he was gone forth into the way, there came one running, and kneeled to him, and asked him, Good Master, what shall I do that I may inherit eternal life? And Jesus said to him, Why callest thou me good? there is none good but one, that is God. Thou knowest the commandments, Do not commit adultery, Do not kill, Do not steal, Do not bear false witness, Defraud not, Honour thy father and mother. And he answered and said unto him, Master, all these have I observed from my youth. Then Jesus beholding him loved him, and said unto him, One thing thou lackest; go thy way, sell whatsoever thou hast, and give to the poor, and thou shalt have treasure in heaven; and come, take up the cross, and follow me. And he was sad at that saying, and went away grieved; for he had great possessions.



A street in Jerusalem.
Along such a thoroughfare Christ carried his cross to the place of execution.

"And Jesus looked round about, and saith unto his disciples, How hardly shall they that have riches enter into the kingdom of God! And the disciples were astonished at his words. But Jesus answered again, and saith unto them, Children,

how hard is it for them that trust in riches to enter into the kingdom of God! It is easier for a camel to go through the eye of a needle, than for a rich man to enter into the kingdom of God."[1]

Moreover, in his tremendous prophecy of this kingdom which was to make all men one together in God, Jesus had small patience for the bargaining righteousness of formal religion. Another large part of his recorded utterances is aimed against the meticulous observance of the rules of the pious career. "Then the Pharisees and scribes asked him, Why walk not thy disciples according to the tradition of the elders, but eat bread with unwashen hands? He answered and said unto them, Well hath Esaias prophesied of you hypocrites, as it is written.

"This people honoureth me with their lips,

"But their heart is far from me.

"Howbeit in vain do they worship me,

"Teaching for doctrines the commandments of men.

"For laying aside the commandment of God, ye hold the tradition of men, as the washing of pots and cups: and many other such like things ye do. And he said unto them, Full well ye reject the commandment of God, that ye may keep your own tradition."[2]

It was not merely a moral and a social revolution that Jesus proclaimed; it is clear from a score of indications that his teaching had a political bent of the plainest sort. It is true that he said his kingdom was not of this world, that it was in the hearts of men and not upon a throne; but it is equally clear that wherever and in what measure his kingdom was set up in the hearts of men, the outer world would be in that measure revolutionized and made new.

Whatever else the deafness and blindness of his hearers may have missed in his utterances, it is plain they did not miss his resolve to revolutionize the world. The whole tenor of the opposition to him and the circumstances of his trial and execution show clearly that to his contemporaries he seemed to propose plainly, and did propose plainly to change and fuse and enlarge all human life.

In view of what he plainly said, is it any wonder that all who were rich and prosperous felt a horror of strange things, a swimming of their world at his teaching? He was dragging out all the little private reservations they had made from social service into the light of a universal religious life. He was like some terrible moral

[1] Mark x, 17-25
[2] Mark vii, 5-9

huntsman digging mankind out of the snug burrows in which they had lived hitherto. In the white blaze of this kingdom of his there was to be no property, no privilege, no pride and precedence; no motive indeed and no reward but love. Is it any wonder that men were dazzled and blinded and cried out against him? Even his disciples cried out when he would not spare them the light. Is it any wonder that the priests realized that between this man and themselves there was no choice but that he or priestcraft should perish? Is it any wonder that the Roman soldiers, confronted and amazed by something soaring over their comprehension and threatening all their disciplines, should take refuge in wild laughter, and crown him with thorns and robe him in purple and make a mock Cæsar of him? For to take him seriously was to enter upon a strange and alarming life, to abandon habits, to control instincts and impulses, to essay an incredible happiness...

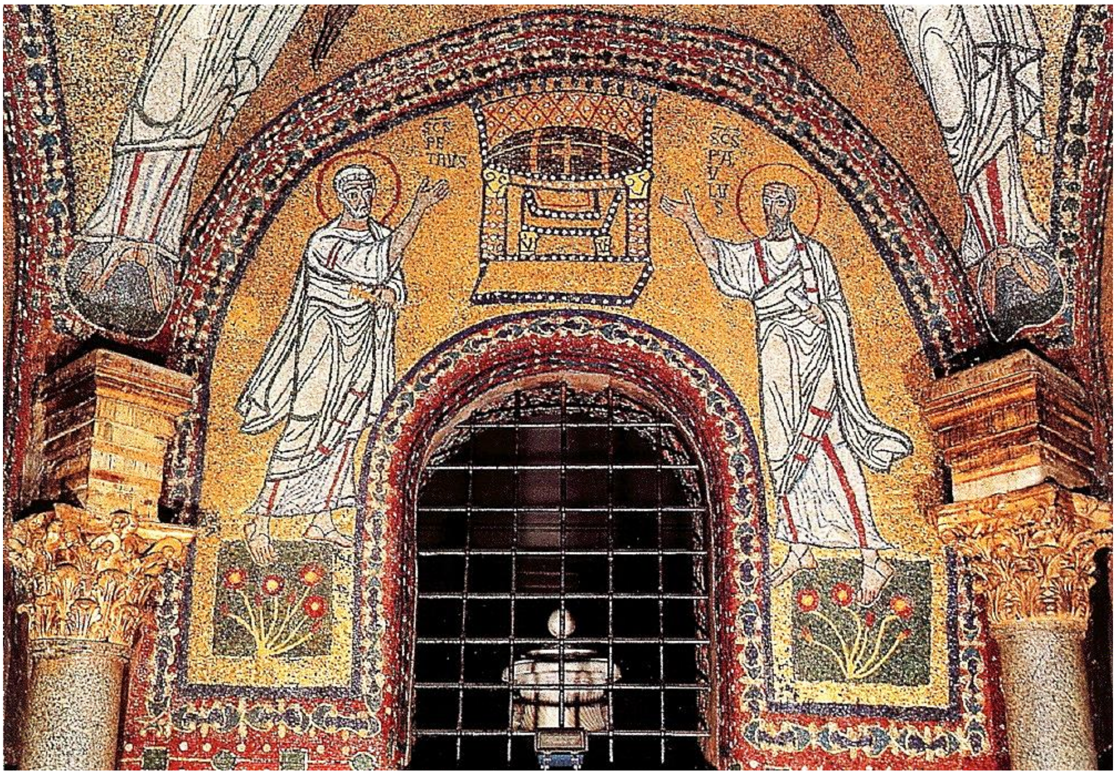
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The Development of Doctrinal Christianity

In the four gospels we find the personality and teachings of Jesus but very little of the dogmas of the Christian church. It is in the epistles, a series of writings by the immediate followers of Jesus, that the broad lines of Christian belief are laid down.

Chief among the makers of Christian doctrine was St. Paul. He had never seen Jesus nor heard him preach. Paul's name was originally Saul, and he was conspicuous at first as an active persecutor of the little band of disciples after the crucifixion. Then he was suddenly converted to Christianity, and he changed his name to Paul. He was a man of great intellectual vigour and deeply and passionately interested in the religious movements of the time. He was well versed in Judaism and in the Mithraism and Alexandrian religion of the day. He carried over many of their ideas and terms of expression into Christianity. He did very little to enlarge or develop the original teaching of Jesus, the teaching of the Kingdom of Heaven. But he taught that Jesus was not only the promised Christ, the promised leader of the Jews, but also that his death was a sacrifice, like the deaths of the ancient sacrificial victims of the primordial civilizations, for the redemption of mankind.

When religions flourish side by side they tend to pick up each other's ceremonial and other outward peculiarities. Buddhism, for example, in China has now almost the same sort of temples and priests and uses as Taoism, which follows in the teachings of Lao Tse. Yet the original teachings of Buddhism and Taoism were almost flatly opposed. And it reflects no doubt or discredit upon the essentials of Christian teaching that it took over not merely such formal things as the shaven priest, the votive offering, the altars, candles, chanting and images of the Alexandrian and Mithraic faiths, but adopted even their devotional phrases and their theological ideas. All these religions were flourishing side by side with many less prominent cults. Each was seeking adherents, and there must have been a constant going and coming of converts between them. Sometimes one or other would be in favour with the government. But Christianity was regarded with more suspicion than its rivals because, like the Jews, its adherents would not perform acts of worship to the God Cæsar. This made it a seditious religion, quite apart from the revolutionary spirit of the teachings of Jesus himself.



Mosaic of ss. Peter and Paul pointing to a throne, on gold background.
From the Ninth Century original, in the Church of Sta. Prassede, Rome.
(In the Victoria and Albert Museum)

St. Paul familiarized his disciples with the idea that Jesus, like Osiris, was a god who died to rise again and give men immortality. And presently the spreading Christian community was greatly torn by complicated theological disputes about the relationship of this God Jesus to God the Father of Mankind. The Arians taught that Jesus was divine, but distant from and inferior to the Father. The Sabellians taught that Jesus was merely an aspect of the Father, and that God was Jesus and Father at the same time just as a man may be a father and an artificer at the same time; and the Trinitarians taught a more subtle doctrine that God was both one and three, Father, Son, and Holy Spirit. For a time it seemed that Arianism would prevail over its rivals, and then after disputes, violence, and wars, the Trinitarian formula became the accepted formula of all Christendom. It may be found in its completest expression in the Athanasian Creed.

We offer no comment on these controversies here. They do not sway history as the personal teaching of Jesus sways history. The personal teaching of Jesus does seem

to mark a new phase in the moral and spiritual life of our race. Its insistence upon the universal Fatherhood of God and the implicit brotherhood of all men, its insistence upon the sacredness of every human personality as a living temple of God, was to have the profoundest effect upon all the subsequent social and political life of mankind. With Christianity, with the spreading teachings of Jesus, a new respect appears in the world for man as man. It may be true, as hostile critics of Christianity have urged, that St. Paul preached obedience to slaves, but it is equally true that the whole spirit of the teachings of Jesus preserved in the gospels was against the subjugation of man by man. And still more distinctly was Christianity opposed to such outrages upon human dignity as the gladiatorial combats in the arena.



The Baptism of Christ
(Sixth Century Ivory Panel in the British Museum)

Throughout the first two centuries after Christ, the Christian religion spread throughout the Roman Empire, weaving together an ever-growing multitude of converts into a new community of ideas and will. The attitude of the emperors varied between hostility and toleration. There were attempts to suppress this new faith in both the second and third centuries; and finally in 303 and the following years a great persecution under the Emperor Diocletian. The considerable accumulations of Church property were seized, all bibles and religious writings were confiscated and destroyed, Christians were put out of the protection of the law and many executed. The destruction of the books is particularly notable. It shows how the power of the written word in holding together the new faith was appreciated by the authorities. These "book religions," Christianity and Judaism, were religions that educated. Their continued existence depended very largely on people being able to read and understand their doctrinal ideas. The older religions had made no such appeal to the personal intelligence. In the ages of barbaric confusion that were now at hand in western Europe it was the Christian church that was mainly instrumental in preserving the tradition of learning.

The persecution of Diocletian failed completely to suppress the growing Christian community. In many provinces it was ineffective because the bulk of the population and many of the officials were Christian. In 317 an edict of toleration was issued by the associated Emperor Galerius, and in 324 Constantine the Great, a friend and on his deathbed a baptized convert to Christianity, became sole ruler of the Roman world. He abandoned all divine pretensions and put Christian symbols on the shields and banners of his troops.

In a few years Christianity was securely established as the official religion of the empire. The competing religions disappeared or were absorbed with extraordinary celerity, and in 390 Theodosius the Great caused the great statue of Jupiter Serapis at Alexandria to be destroyed. From the outset of the fifth century onward the only priests or temples in the Roman Empire were Christian priests and temples.

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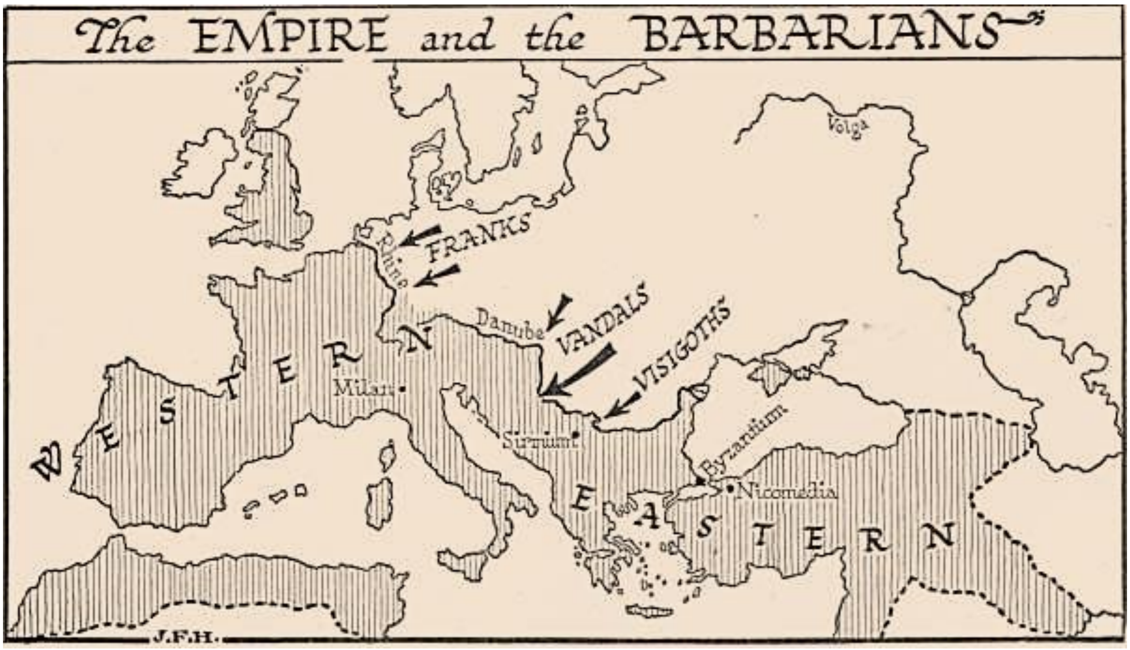
The Barbarians Break the Empire into East and West

Throughout the third century the Roman Empire, decaying socially and disintegrating morally, faced the barbarians. The emperors of this period were fighting military autocrats, and the capital of the Empire shifted with the necessities of their military policy. Now the imperial headquarters would be at Milan in North Italy, now in what is now Serbia at Sirmium or Nish, now in Nicomedia in Asia Minor. Rome halfway down Italy was too far from the centre of interest to be a convenient imperial seat. It was a declining city. Over most of the empire peace still prevailed and men went about without arms. The armies continued to be the sole repositories of power; the Emperors, dependent on their legions, became more and more autocratic to the rest of the Empire and their state more and more like that of the Persian and other oriental monarchs. Diocletian assumed a royal diadem and oriental robes.

All along the imperial frontier, which ran roughly along the Rhine and Danube, enemies were now pressing. The Franks and other German tribes had come up to the Rhine. In north Hungary were the Vandals; in what was once Dacia and is now Roumania, the Visigoths or West Goths. Behind these in south Russia were the East Goths or Ostrogoths, and beyond these again in the Volga region the Alans. But now Mongolian peoples were forcing their way towards Europe. The Huns were already exacting tribute from the Alans and Ostrogoths and pushing them to the west.

In Asia the Roman frontiers were crumpling back under the push of a renascent Persia. This new Persia, the Persia of the Sassenid kings, was to be a vigorous and on the whole a successful rival of the Roman Empire in Asia for the next three centuries.

A glance at the map of Europe will show the reader the peculiar weakness of the empire. The river Danube comes down to within a couple of hundred miles of the Adriatic Sea in the region of what is now Bosnia and Serbia. It makes a square re-entrant angle there. The Romans never kept their sea communications in good order, and this two hundred mile strip of land was their line of communication between the western Latin-speaking part of the empire and the eastern Greek-speaking portion. Against this square angle of the Danube the barbarian pressure was greatest. When they broke through there it was inevitable that the empire should fall into two parts.



A more vigorous empire might have thrust forward and reconquered Dacia, but the Roman Empire lacked any such vigour. Constantine the Great was certainly a monarch of great devotion and intelligence. He beat back a raid of the Goths from just these vital Balkan regions, but he had no force to carry the frontier across the Danube. He was too pre-occupied with the internal weaknesses of the empire. He brought the solidarity and moral force of Christianity to revive the spirit of the declining Empire, and he decided to create a new permanent capital at Byzantium upon the Hellespont. This new-made Byzantium, which was re-christened Constantinople in his honour, was still building when he died. Towards the end of his reign occurred a remarkable transaction. The Vandals, being pressed by the Goths, asked to be received into the Roman Empire. They were assigned lands in Pannonia, which is now that part of Hungary west of the Danube, and their fighting men became nominally legionaries. But these new legionaries remained under their own chiefs. Rome failed to digest them.

Constantine died working to reorganize his great realm, and soon the frontiers were ruptured again and the Visigoths came almost to Constantinople. They defeated the Emperor Valens at Adrianople and made a settlement in what is now Bulgaria, similar to the settlement of the Vandals in Pannonia. Nominally they were subjects of the Emperor, practically they were conquerors.



Constantine's Pillar, Constantinople
Photo: Sebah & Foaillier

From A.D. 379 to 395 reigned the Emperor Theodosius the Great, and while he reigned the empire was still formally intact. Over the armies of Italy and Pannonia presided Stilicho, a Vandal, over the armies in the Balkan peninsula, Alaric, a Goth. When Theodosius died at the close of the fourth century he left two sons. Alaric supported one of these, Arcadius, in Constantinople, and Stilicho the other, Honorius, in Italy. In other words Alaric and Stilicho fought for the empire with the princes as puppets. In the course of their struggle Alaric marched into Italy and after a short siege took Rome (A.D. 410).

The opening half of the fifth century saw the whole of the Roman empire in Europe the prey of robber armies of barbarians. It is difficult to visualize the state of

affairs in the world at that time. Over France, Spain, Italy and the Balkan peninsula, the great cities that had flourished under the early empire still stood, impoverished, partly depopulated and falling into decay. Life in them must have been shallow, mean, and full of uncertainty. Local officials asserted their authority and went on with their work with such conscience as they had, no doubt in the name of a now remote and inaccessible emperor. The churches went on, but usually with illiterate priests. There was little reading and much superstition and fear. But everywhere except where looters had destroyed them, books and pictures and statuary and such like works of art were still to be found.

The life of the countryside had also degenerated. Everywhere this Roman world was much more weedy and untidy than it had been. In some regions war and pestilence had brought the land down to the level of a waste. Roads and forests were infested with robbers. Into such regions the barbarians marched, with little or no opposition, and set up their chiefs as rulers, often with Roman official titles. If they were half civilized barbarians they would give the conquered districts tolerable terms, they would take possession of the towns, associate and intermarry, and acquire (with an accent) the Latin speech; but the Jutes, the Angles and Saxons who submerged the Roman province of Britain were agriculturalists and had no use for towns, they seem to have swept south Britain clear of the Romanized population and they replaced the language by their own Teutonic dialects, which became at last English.



Base of the “Obelisk of Theodosius,” Constantinople.
The obelisk of Thothmes, taken from Egypt to Constantinople by Theodosius and placed upon the pedestal here shown; an interesting example of early Byzantine art.

It is impossible in the space at our disposal to trace the movements of all the various German and Slavonic tribes as they went to and fro in the disorganized empire in search of plunder and a pleasant home. But let the Vandals serve as an example. They came into history in east Germany. They settled, as we have told, in Pannonia. Thence they moved somewhen about A.D. 425 through the intervening provinces to Spain. There they found Visigoths from South Russia and other German tribes setting up dukes and kings. From Spain the Vandals under Genseric sailed for North Africa (429), captured Carthage (439), and built a fleet. They secured the mastery of the sea and captured and pillaged Rome (455), which had recovered very imperfectly from her capture and looting by Alaric half a century earlier. Then the Vandals made themselves masters of Sicily, Corsica, Sardinia and most of the other islands of the western Mediterranean. They made, in fact, a sea empire very similar in its extent to the sea empire of Carthage seven hundred odd years before. They were at the climax of their power about 477. They were a mere handful of conquerors holding all this country. In the next century almost all their territory had been reconquered for the empire of Constantinople during a transitory blaze of energy under Justinian I.

The story of the Vandals is but one sample of a host of similar adventures. But now there was coming into the European world the least kindred and most redoubtable of all these devastators, the Mongolian Huns or Tartars, a yellow people active and able, such as the western world had never before encountered.

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The Huns and the end of the Western Empire

This appearance of a conquering Mongolian people in Europe may be taken to mark a new stage in human history. Until the last century or so before the Christian era, the Mongol and the Nordic peoples had not been in close touch. Far away in the frozen lands beyond the northern forests the Lapps, a Mongolian people, had drifted westward as far as Lapland, but they played no part in the main current of history. For thousands of years the western world carried on the dramatic interplay of the Aryan, Semitic and fundamental brunet peoples with very little interference (except for an Ethiopian invasion of Egypt or so) either from the black peoples to the south or from the Mongolian world in the far East.

It is probable that there were two chief causes for the new westward drift of the nomadic Mongolians. One was the consolidation of the great empire of China, its extension northward and the increase of its population during the prosperous period of the Han dynasty. The other was some process of climatic change; a lesser rainfall that abolished swamps and forests perhaps, or a greater rainfall that extended grazing over desert steppes, or even perhaps both these processes going on in different regions but which anyhow facilitated a westward migration. A third contributary cause was the economic wretchedness, internal decay and falling population of the Roman Empire. The rich men of the later Roman Republic, and then the tax-gatherers of the military Emperors had utterly consumed its vitality. So we have the factors of thrust, means and opportunity. There was pressure from the east, rot in the west and an open road.

The Hun had reached the eastern boundaries of European Russia by the first century A.D., but it was not until the fourth and fifth centuries A.D. that these horsemen rose to predominance upon the steppes. The fifth century was the Hun's century. The first Huns to come into Italy were mercenary bands in the pay of Stilicho the Vandal, the master of Honorius. Presently they were in possession of Pannonia, the empty nest of the Vandals.

By the second quarter of the fifth century a great war chief had arisen among the Huns, Attila. We have only vague and tantalizing glimpses of his power. He ruled not only over the Huns but over a conglomerate of tributary Germanic tribes; his empire

extended from the Rhine across the plains into Central Asia. He exchanged ambassadors with China. His head camp was in the plain of Hungary east of the Danube. There he was visited by an envoy from Constantinople, Priscus, who has left us an account of his state. The way of living of these Mongols was very like the way of living of the primitive Aryans they had replaced. The common folk were in huts and tents; the chiefs lived in great stockaded timber halls. There were feasts and drinking and singing by the bards. The Homeric heroes and even the Macedonian companions of Alexander would probably have felt more at home in the camp-capital of Attila than they would have done in the cultivated and decadent court of Theodosius II, the son of Arcadius, who was then reigning in Constantinople.

For a time it seemed as though the nomads under the leadership of the Huns and Attila would play the same part towards the Græco-Roman civilization of the Mediterranean countries that the barbaric Greeks had played long ago to the Ægean civilization. It looked like history repeating itself upon a larger stage. But the Huns were much more wedded to the nomadic life than the early Greeks, who were rather migratory cattle farmers than true nomads. The Huns raided and plundered but did not settle.

For some years Attila bullied Theodosius as he chose. His armies devastated and looted right down to the walls of Constantinople, Gibbon says that he totally destroyed no less than seventy cities in the Balkan peninsula, and Theodosius bought him off by payments of tribute and tried to get rid of him for good by sending secret agents to assassinate him. In 451 Attila turned his attention to the remains of the Latin-speaking half of the empire and invaded Gaul. Nearly every town in northern Gaul was sacked. Franks, Visigoths and the imperial forces united against him and he was defeated at Troyes in a vast dispersed battle in which a multitude of men, variously estimated as between 150,000 and 300,000, were killed. This checked him in Gaul, but it did not exhaust his enormous military resources. Next year he came into Italy by way of Venetia, burnt Aquileia and Padua and looted Milan.



Head of Barbarian chief
(In the British Museum)

Numbers of fugitives from these north Italian towns and particularly from Padua fled to islands in the lagoons at the head of the Adriatic and laid there the foundations of the city state of Venice, which was to become one of the greatest of the trading centres in the middle ages.

In 453 Attila died suddenly after a great feast to celebrate his marriage to a young woman, and at his death this plunder confederation of his fell to pieces. The actual Huns disappear from history, mixed into the surrounding more numerous Aryan-speaking populations. But these great Hun raids practically consummated the end of the Latin Roman empire. After his death ten different Emperors ruled in Rome in twenty years, set up by Vandal and other mercenary troops. The Vandals from Carthage took and sacked Rome in 455. Finally in 476 Odoacer, the chief of the barbarian troops, suppressed a Pannonian who was figuring as Emperor under the impressive name of Romulus Augustulus, and informed the Court of Constantinople that there was no longer an emperor in the west. So, ingloriously, the Latin Roman empire came to an end. In 493 Theodoric the Goth became King of Rome.

All over western and central Europe barbarian chiefs were now reigning as kings, dukes and the like, practically independent but for the most part professing some sort of shadowy allegiance to the Emperor. There were hundreds and perhaps thousands of such practically independent brigand rulers. In Gaul, Spain and Italy and in Dacia the Latin speech still prevailed in locally distorted forms, but in Britain and east of the Rhine languages of the German group (or in Bohemia a Slavonic language, Czech) were the common speech. The superior clergy and a small remnant of other educated men read and wrote Latin. Everywhere life was insecure and property was held by the strong arm. Castles multiplied and roads fell into decay. The dawn of the sixth century was an age of division and of intellectual darkness throughout the western world. Had it not been for the monks and Christian missionaries Latin learning might have perished altogether.

Why had the Roman Empire grown and why had it so completely decayed? It grew because at first the idea of citizenship held it together. Throughout the days of the expanding republic, and even into the days of the early Empire, there remained a great number of men conscious of Roman citizenship, feeling it a privilege and an obligation to be a Roman citizen, confident of their rights under the Roman law and willing to make sacrifices in the name of Rome. The prestige of Rome as of something just and great and law-upholding spread far beyond the Roman boundaries. But even

as early as the Punic wars the sense of citizenship was being undermined by the growth of wealth and slavery. Citizenship spread indeed but not the idea of citizenship.

The Roman empire was after all a very primitive organization; it did not educate, did not explain itself to its increasing multitudes of citizens, did not invite their co-operation in its decisions. There was no network of schools to ensure a common understanding, no distribution of news to sustain collective activity. The adventurers who struggled for power from the days of Marius and Sulla onward had no idea of creating and calling in public opinion upon the imperial affairs. The spirit of citizenship died of starvation and no one observed it die. All empires, all states, all organizations of human society are, in the ultimate, things of understanding and will. There remained no will for the Roman empire in the world and so it came to an end.

But though the Latin-speaking Roman empire died in the fifth century, something else had been born within it that was to avail itself enormously of its prestige and tradition, and that was the Latin-speaking half of the Catholic Church. This lived while the empire died because it appealed to the minds and wills of men, because it had books and a great system of teachers and missionaries to hold it together, things stronger than any law or legions. Throughout the fourth and fifth centuries A.D. while the empire was decaying, Christianity was spreading to a universal dominion in Europe. It conquered its conquerors, the barbarians. When Attila seemed disposed to march on Rome, the patriarch of Rome intercepted him and did what no armies could do, turning him back by sheer moral force.

The Patriarch or Pope of Rome claimed to be the head of the entire Christian church. Now that there were no more emperors, he began to annex imperial titles and claims. He took the title of *pontifex maximus*, head sacrificial priest of the Roman dominion, the most ancient of all the titles that the Emperors had enjoyed.

41

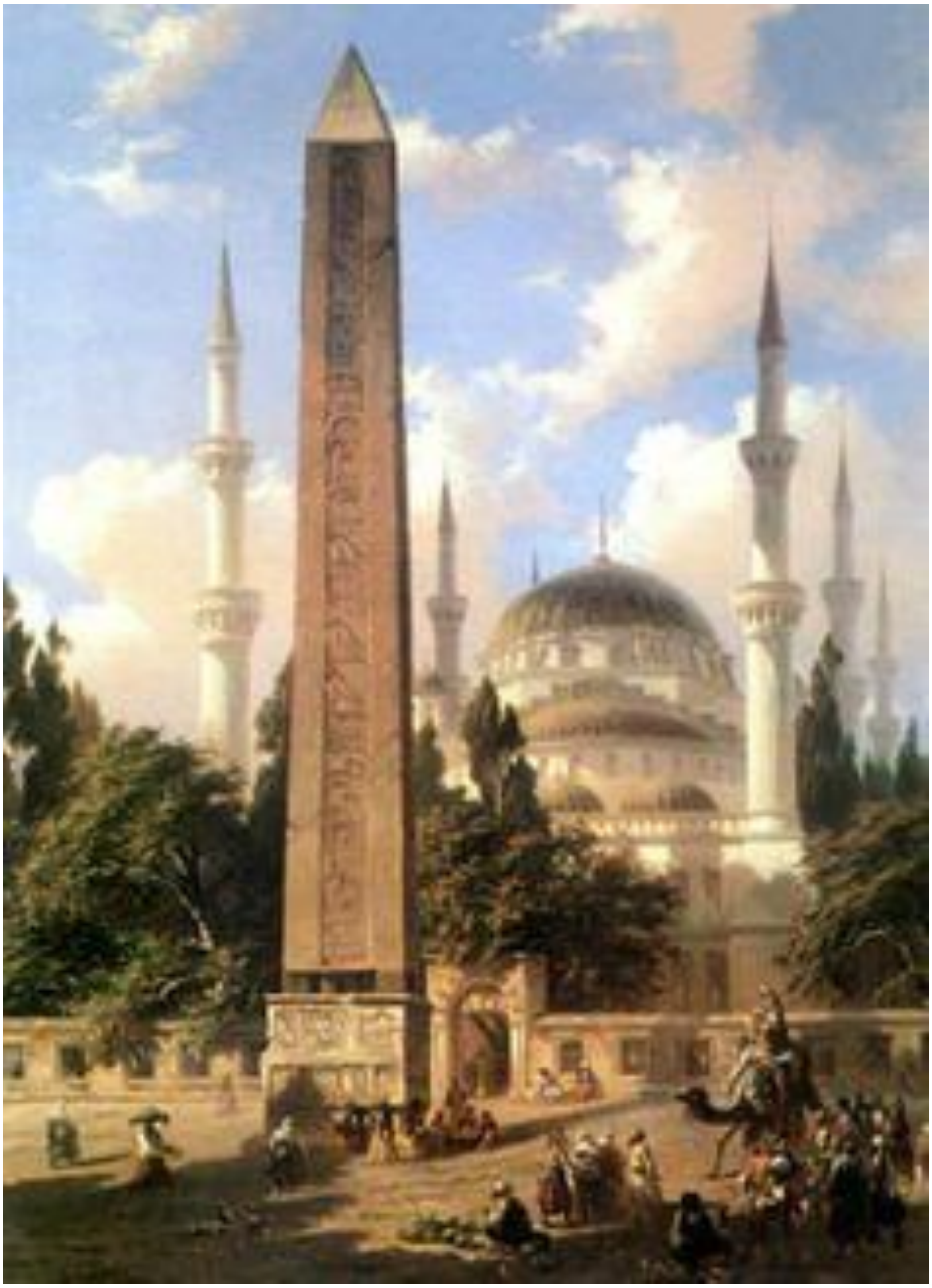
The Byzantine and Sassanid Empires

The Greek-speaking eastern half of the Roman Empire showed much more political tenacity than the western half. It weathered the disasters of the fifth century A.D., which saw a complete and final breaking up of the original Latin Roman power. Attila bullied the Emperor Theodosius II and sacked and raided almost to the walls of Constantinople, but that city remained intact. The Nubians came down the Nile and looted upper Egypt, but lower Egypt and Alexandria were left still fairly prosperous. Most of Asia Minor was held against the Sassanid Persians.

The sixth century, which was an age of complete darkness for the West, saw indeed a considerable revival of the Greek power. Justinian I (527-565) was a ruler of very great ambition and energy, and he was married to the Empress Theodora, a woman of quite equal capacity who had begun life as an actress. Justinian reconquered North Africa from the Vandals and most of Italy from the Goths. He even regained the south of Spain. He did not limit his energies to naval and military enterprises. He founded a university, built the great church of St. Sophia in Constantinople and codified the Roman law. But in order to destroy a rival to his university foundation he closed the schools of philosophy in Athens, which had been going on in unbroken continuity from the days of Plato, that is to say for nearly a thousand years.

From the third century onwards the Persian Empire had been the steadfast rival of the Byzantine. The two Empires kept Asia Minor, Syria and Egypt in a state of perpetual and waste.

From the third century onwards the Persian Empire had been the steadfast rival of the Byzantine. The two Empires kept Asia Minor, Syria and Egypt in a state of perpetual unrest and waste. In the first century A.D., these lands were still at a high level of civilization, wealthy and with an abundant population, but the continual coming and going of armies, massacres, looting and war taxation, wore them down steadily until only shattered and ruinous cities remained upon a countryside of scattered peasants. In this melancholy process of impoverishment and disorder lower Egypt fared perhaps less badly than the rest of the world. Alexandria, like Constantinople, continued a dwindling trade between the east and the west.



The church (now a mosque) of S. Sophia, Constantinople.
The obelisk of Theodosius is in the foreground.

Science and political philosophy seemed dead now in both these warring and decaying Empires. The last philosophers of Athens, until their suppression, preserved the texts of the great literature of the past with an infinite reverence and want of understanding. But there remained no class of men in the world, no free gentlemen with bold and independent habits of thought, to carry on the tradition of frank

statement and enquiry embodied in these writings. The social and political chaos accounts largely for the disappearance of this class, but there was also another reason why the human intelligence was sterile and feverish during this age. In both Persia and Byzantium it was an age of intolerance. Both Empires were religious empires in a new way, in a way that greatly hampered the free activities of the human mind.



The Magnificent roof-work in S. Sophia

Of course the oldest empires in the world were religious empires, centering upon the worship of a god or of a god-king. Alexander was treated as a divinity and the Cæsars were gods in so much as they had altars and temples devoted to them and the offering of incense was made a test of loyalty to the Roman state. But these older religions were essentially religions of act and fact. They did not invade the mind. If a man offered his sacrifice and bowed to the god, he was left not only to think but to say practically whatever he liked about the affair. But the new sort of religions that had come into the world, and particularly Christianity, turned inward. These new faiths demanded not simply conformity but understanding belief. Naturally fierce controversy ensued upon the exact meaning of the things believed. These new religions were creed religions. The world was confronted with a new word, Orthodoxy, and with a stern resolve to keep not only acts but speech and private thought within the limits of a set teaching. For to hold a wrong opinion, much more to convey it to other people, was no longer regarded as an intellectual defect but a moral fault that might condemn a soul to everlasting destruction.



The Ravenna panel, depicting Justinian and his court
Photo: Alinari

Both Ardashir I who founded the Sassanid dynasty in the third century A.D., and Constantine the Great who reconstructed the Roman Empire in the fourth, turned to religious organizations for help, because in these organizations they saw a new means of using and controlling the wills of men. And already before the end of the fourth century both empires were persecuting free talk and religious innovation. In Persia Ardashir found the ancient Persian religion of Zoroaster (or Zarathushtra) with its priests and temples and a sacred fire that burnt upon its altars, ready for his purpose as a state religion. Before the end of the third century Zoroastrianism was persecuting Christianity, and in 277 Mani, the founder of a new faith, the Manichæans, was crucified and his body flayed. Constantinople, on its side, was busy hunting out Christian heresies. Manichæan ideas infected Christianity and had to be fought with the fiercest methods; in return ideas from Christianity affected the purity of the Zoroastrian doctrine. All ideas became suspect. Science, which demands before all things the free action of an untroubled mind, suffered a complete eclipse throughout this phase of intolerance.



The rock-hewn temple at Petra

War, the bitterest theology, and the usual vices of mankind constituted Byzantine life of those days. It was picturesque, it was romantic; it had little sweetness or light. When Byzantium and Persia were not fighting the barbarians from the north, they wasted Asia Minor and Syria in dreary and destructive hostilities. Even in close alliance these two empires would have found it a hard task to turn back the barbarians and recover their prosperity. The Turks or Tartars first come into history as the allies first of one power and then of another. In the sixth century the two chief antagonists were Justinian and Chosroes I; in the opening of the seventh the Emperor Heraclius was pitted against Chosroes II (580).

At first and until after Heraclius had become Emperor (610) Chosroes II carried all before him. He took Antioch, Damascus and Jerusalem and his armies reached Chalcedon, which is in Asia Minor over against Constantinople. In 619 he conquered Egypt. Then Heraclius pressed a counter attack home and routed a Persian army at Nineveh (627), although at that time there were still Persian troops at Chalcedon. In 628 Chosroes II was deposed and murdered by his son, Kavadh, and an inconclusive peace was made between the two exhausted empires.

Byzantium and Persia had fought their last war. But few people as yet dreamt of the storm that was even then gathering in the deserts to put an end for ever to this aimless, chronic struggle.

While Heraclius was restoring order in Syria a message reached him. It had been brought in to the imperial outpost at Bostra south of Damascus; it was in Arabic, an obscure Semitic desert language, and it was read to the Emperor, if it reached him at all, by an interpreter. It was from someone who called himself "Muhammad the Prophet of God." It called upon the Emperor to acknowledge the One True God and to serve him. What the Emperor said is not recorded.

A similar message came to Kavadh at Ctesiphon. He was annoyed, tore up the letter, and bade the messenger begone.

This Muhammad, it appeared, was a Bedouin leader whose headquarters were in the mean little desert town of Medina. He was preaching a new religion of faith in the One True God.

"Even so, O Lord!" he said; "rend thou his Kingdom from Kavadh."

42

The Dynasties of Suy and Tang in China

Throughout the fifth, sixth, seventh and eighth centuries, there was a steady drift of Mongolian peoples westward. The Huns of Attila were merely precursors of this advance, which led at last to the establishment of Mongolian peoples in Finland, Esthonia and Hungary, where their descendants, speaking languages akin to Turkish, survive to this day. The Bulgarians also are a Turkish people, but they have acquired an Aryan speech. The Mongolians were playing a rôle towards the Aryanized civilizations of Europe and Persia and India, that the Aryans had played to the Ægean and Semitic civilizations many centuries before.

In Central Asia the Turkish peoples had taken root in what is now Western Turkestan, and Persia already employed many Turkish officials and Turkish mercenaries. The Parthians had gone out of history, absorbed into the general population of Persia. There were no more Aryan nomads in the history of Central Asia; Mongolian people had replaced them. The Turks became masters of Asia from China to the Caspian.

The same great pestilence at the end of the second century A.D. that had shattered the Roman Empire had overthrown the Han dynasty in China. Then came a period of division and of Hunnish conquests from which China arose refreshed, more rapidly and more completely than Europe was destined to do. Before the end of the sixth century China was reunited under the Suy dynasty, and this by the time of Heraclius gave place to the Tang dynasty, whose reign marks another great period of prosperity for China.

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Chinese earthenware art of the Tang Dynasty, 618-906.
Specimens in glazed earthenware, in brown, green and buff, of the Tang period, witnessing to a humorous, highly civilized life.

Throughout the seventh, eighth and ninth centuries China was the most secure and civilized country in the world. The Han dynasty had extended her boundaries in the north; the Suy and Tang dynasties now spread her civilization to the south, and China began to assume the proportions she has to-day. In Central Asia indeed she reached much farther, extending at last, through tributary Turkish tribes, to Persia and the Caspian Sea.

The new China that had arisen was a very different land from the old China of the Hans. A new and more vigorous literary school appeared, there was a great poetic revival; Buddhism had revolutionized philosophical and religious thought. There

were great advances in artistic work, in technical skill and in all the amenities of life. Tea was first used, paper manufactured and wood-block printing began. Millions of people indeed were leading orderly, graceful and kindly lives in China during these centuries when the attenuated populations of Europe and Western Asia were living either in hovels, small walled cities or grim robber fortresses. While the mind of the west was black with theological obsessions, the mind of China was open and tolerant and enquiring.

One of the earliest monarchs of the Tang dynasty was Tai- tsung, who began to reign in 627, the year of the victory of Heraclius at Nineveh. He received an embassy from Heraclius, who was probably seeking an ally in the rear of Persia. From Persia itself came a party of Christian missionaries (635). They were allowed to explain their creed to Tai-tsung and he examined a Chinese translation of their Scriptures. He pronounced this strange religion acceptable, and gave permission for the foundation of a church and monastery.

To this monarch also (in 628) came messengers from Muhammad. They came to Canton on a trading ship. They had sailed the whole way from Arabia along the Indian coasts. Unlike Heraclius and Kavadh, Tai-tsung gave these envoys a courteous hearing. He expressed his interest in their theological ideas and assisted them to build a mosque in Canton, a mosque which survives, it is said, to this day, the oldest mosque in the world.

43

Muhammad and Islam

A prophetic amateur of history surveying the world in the opening of the seventh century might have concluded very reasonably that it was only a question of a few centuries before the whole of Europe and Asia fell under Mongolian domination. There were no signs of order or union in Western Europe, and the Byzantine and Persian Empires were manifestly bent upon a mutual destruction. India also was divided and wasted. On the other hand China was a steadily expanding empire which probably at that time exceeded all Europe in population, and the Turkish people who were growing to power in Central Asia were disposed to work in accord with China. And such a prophecy would not have been an altogether vain one. A time was to come in the thirteenth century when a Mongolian overlord would rule from the Danube to the Pacific, and Turkish dynasties were destined to reign over the entire Byzantine and Persian Empires, over Egypt and most of India.

Where our prophet would have been most likely to have erred would have been in under-estimating the recuperative power of the Latin end of Europe and in ignoring the latent forces of the Arabian desert. Arabia would have seemed what it had been for time immemorial, the refuge of small and bickering nomadic tribes. No Semitic people had founded an empire now for more than a thousand years.

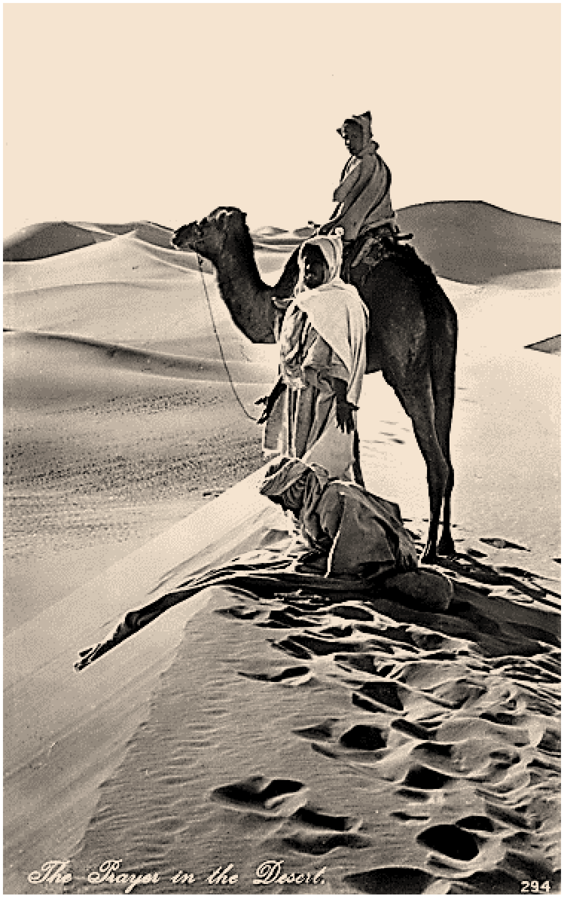
Then suddenly the Bedouin flared out for a brief century of splendour. They spread their rule and language from Spain to the boundaries of China. They gave the world a new culture. They created a religion that is still to this day one of the most vital forces in the world.

The man, Muhammad, who fired this Arab flame appears first in history as the young husband of the widow of a rich merchant of the town of Mecca. Until he was forty he did very little to distinguish himself in the world. He seems to have taken considerable interest in religious discussion. Mecca was a pagan city at that time worshipping in particular a black stone, the Kaaba, of great repute throughout all Arabia and a centre of pilgrimages; but there were great numbers of Jews in the country—indeed all the southern portion of Arabia professed the Jewish faith—and there were Christian churches in Syria.

About forty Muhammad began to develop prophetic characteristics like those of

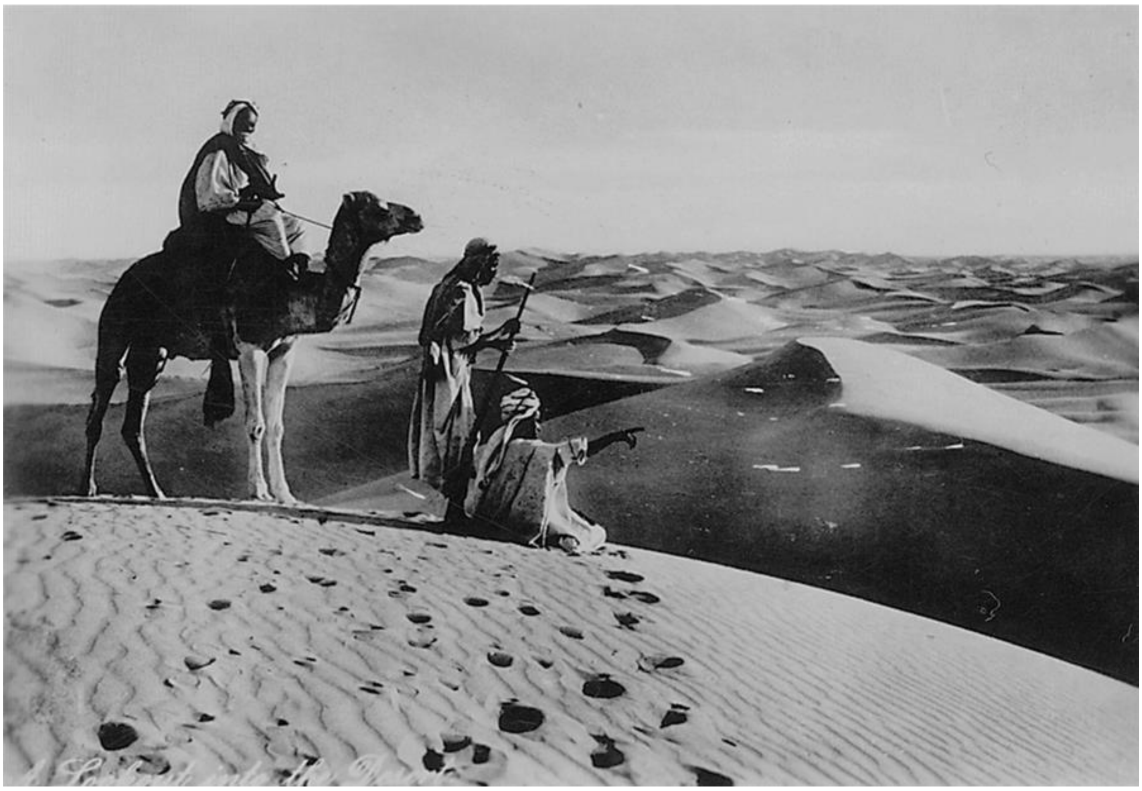
the Hebrew prophets twelve hundred years before him. He talked first to his wife of the One True God, and of the rewards and punishments of virtue and wickedness. There can be no doubt that his thoughts were very strongly influenced by Jewish and Christian ideas. He gathered about him a small circle of believers and presently began to preach in the town against the prevalent idolatry. This made him extremely unpopular with his fellow townsmen because the pilgrimages to the Kaaba were the chief source of such prosperity as Mecca enjoyed. He became bolder and more definite in his teaching, declaring himself to be the last chosen prophet of God entrusted with a mission to perfect religion. Abraham, he declared, and Jesus Christ were his forerunners. He had been chosen to complete and perfect the revelation of God's will.

He produced verses which he said had been communicated to him by an angel, and he had a strange vision in which he was taken up through the Heavens to God and instructed in his mission.



At prayer in the desert
Photo: Lehnert & Landrock

As his teaching increased in force the hostility of his fellow townsmen increased also. At last a plot was made to kill him; but he escaped with his faithful friend and disciple, Abu Bekr, to the friendly town of Medina which adopted his doctrine. Hostilities followed between Mecca and Medina which ended at last in a treaty. Mecca was to adopt the worship of the One True God and accept Muhammad as his prophet, *but the adherents of the new faith were still to make the pilgrimage to Mecca* just as they had done when they were pagans. So Muhammad established the One True God in Mecca without injuring its pilgrim traffic. In 629 Muhammad returned to Mecca as its master, a year after he had sent out these envoys of his to Heraclius, Tai-tsung, Kavadh and all the rulers of the earth.



Looking across the sea of sand
Photo: Lehnert & Landrock

Then for four years more until his death in 632, Muhammad spread his power over the rest of Arabia. He married a number of wives in his declining years, and his life on the whole was by modern standards unedifying. He seems to have been a man compounded of very considerable vanity, greed, cunning, self-deception and quite

sincere religious passion. He dictated a book of injunctions and expositions, the Koran, which he declared was communicated to him from God. Regarded as literature or philosophy the Koran is certainly unworthy of its alleged Divine authorship.

Yet when the manifest defects of Muhammad's life and writings have been allowed for, there remains in Islam, this faith he imposed upon the Arabs, much power and inspiration. One is its uncompromising monotheism; its simple enthusiastic faith in the rule and fatherhood of God and its freedom from theological complications. Another is its complete detachment from the sacrificial priest and the temple. It is an entirely prophetic religion, proof against any possibility of relapse towards blood sacrifices. In the Koran the limited and ceremonial nature of the pilgrimage to Mecca is stated beyond the possibility of dispute, and every precaution was taken by Muhammad to prevent the deification of himself after his death. And a third element of strength lay in the insistence of Islam upon the perfect brotherhood and equality before God of all believers, whatever their colour, origin or status.

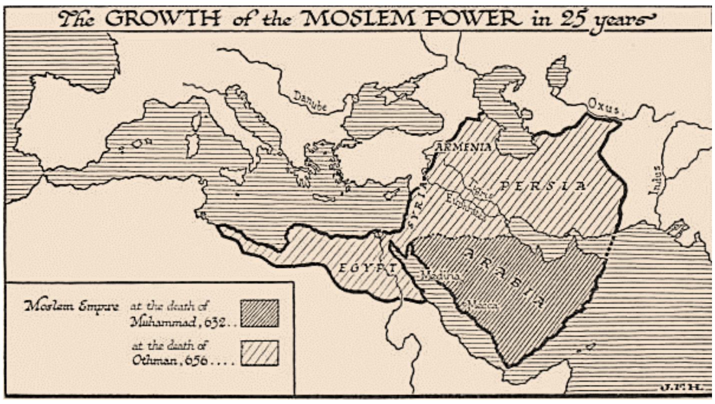
These are the things that made Islam a power in human affairs. It has been said that the true founder of the Empire of Islam was not so much Muhammad as his friend and helper Abu Bekr. If Muhammad, with his shifty character, was the mind and imagination of primitive Islam, Abu Bekr was its conscience and its will. Whenever Muhammad wavered Abu Bekr sustained him. And when Muhammad died, Abu Bekr became Caliph (= successor), and with the faith that moves mountains, he set himself simply and sanely to organize the subjugation of the whole world to Allah—with little armies of 3,000 or 4,000 Arabs—according to those letters the prophet had written from Medina in 628 to all the monarchs of the world.

44

The Great Days of the Arabs

There follows the most amazing story of conquest in the whole history of our race. The Byzantine army was smashed at the battle of the Yarmuk (a tributary of the Jordan) in 634; and the Emperor Heraclius, his energy sapped by dropsy and his resources exhausted by the Persian war, saw his new conquests in Syria, Damascus, Palmyra, Antioch, Jerusalem and the rest, fall almost without resistance to the Moslim. Large elements in the population went over to Islam. Then the Moslim turned east. The Persians had found an able general in Rustam; they had a great host with a force of elephants; and for three days they fought the Arabs at Kadessia (637) and broke at last in headlong rout.

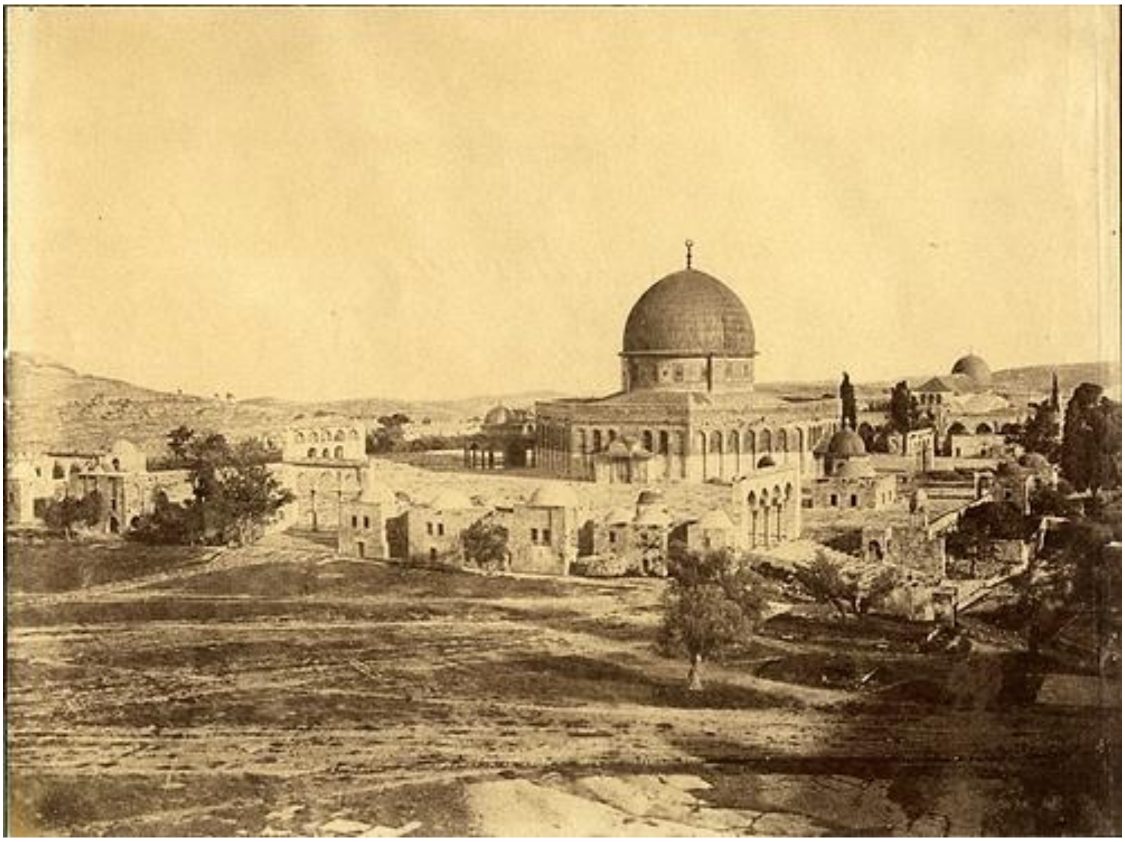
The conquest of all Persia followed, and the Moslem Empire pushed far into Western Turkestan and eastward until it met the Chinese. Egypt fell almost without resistance to the new conquerors, who full of a fanatical belief in the sufficiency of the Koran, wiped out the vestiges of the book-copying industry of the Alexandria Library. The tide of conquest poured along the north coast of Africa to the Straits of Gibraltar and Spain. Spain was invaded in 710 and the Pyrenees mountains were reached in 720. In 732 the Arab advance had reached the centre of France, but here it was stopped for good at the battle of Poitiers and thrust back as far as the Pyrenees again. The conquest of Egypt had given the Moslim a fleet, and for a time it looked as though they would take Constantinople. They made repeated sea attacks between 672 and 718, but the great city held out against them.





The Arabs had little political aptitude and no political experience, and this great Empire with its capital now at Damascus, which stretched from Spain to China, was destined to break up very speedily. From the very beginning doctrinal differences undermined its unity. But our interest here lies not with the story of its political disintegration but with its effect upon the human mind and upon the general destinies of our race. The Arab intelligence had been flung across the world even more swiftly and dramatically than had the Greek a thousand years before. The intellectual stimulation of the whole world west of China, the break up of old ideas and development of new ones, was enormous.

In Persia this fresh excited Arabic mind came into contact not only with Manichæan, Zoroastrian and Christian doctrines, but with the scientific Greek literature, preserved not only in Greek but in Syrian translations. It found Greek learning in Egypt also. Everywhere, and particularly in Spain, it discovered an active Jewish tradition of speculation and discussion. In Central Asia it met Buddhism and the material achievements of Chinese civilization. It learnt the manufacture of paper—which made printed books possible—from the Chinese. And finally it came into touch with Indian mathematics and philosophy.



Jerusalem, showing the Mosque of Omar

Very speedily the intolerant self-sufficiency of the early days of faith, which made the Koran seem the only possible book, was dropped. Learning sprang up everywhere in the footsteps of the Arab conquerors. By the eighth century there was an educational organization throughout the whole "Arabized" world. In the ninth learned men in the schools of Cordoba in Spain were corresponding with learned men in Cairo, Bagdad, Bokhara and Samarkand. The Jewish mind assimilated very readily with the Arab, and for a time the two Semitic races worked together through the medium of Arabic. Long after the political break up and enfeeblement of the Arabs, this intellectual community of the Arab-speaking world endured. It was still producing very considerable results in the thirteenth century.



View of Cairo mosques

So it was that the systematic accumulation and criticism of facts which was first begun by the Greeks, was resumed in this astonishing renascence of the Semitic world. The seed of Aristotle and the museum of Alexandria that had lain so long inactive and neglected, now germinated and began to grow towards fruition. Very great advances were made in mathematical, medical and physical science. The clumsy Roman numerals were ousted by the Arabic figures we use to this day and the zero sign was first employed. The very name *algebra* is Arabic. So is the word chemistry. The names of such stars as Algol, Aldebaran and Boötes preserve the traces of Arab conquests in the sky. Their philosophy was destined to reanimate the medieval philosophy of France and Italy and the whole Christian world.

The Arab experimental chemists were called alchemists, and they were still sufficiently barbaric in spirit to keep their methods and results secret as far as possible. They realized from the very beginning what enormous advantages their possible discoveries might give them, and what far-reaching consequences they might have on human life. They came upon many metallurgical and technical devices of the utmost value; alloys and dyes, distilling, tinctures and essences, optical glass; but the two chief ends they sought, they sought in vain. One was "the philosopher's stone"—a

means of changing the metallic elements one into another and so getting a control of artificial gold, and the other was the *elixir vitae* a stimulant that would revivify age and prolong life indefinitely. The crabbed, patient experimenting of these Arab alchemists spread into the Christian world. The fascination of their enquiries spread. Very gradually the activities of these alchemists became more social and co-operative. They found it profitable to exchange and compare ideas. By insensible gradations the last of the alchemists became the first of the experimental philosophers.

The old alchemists sought the philosopher's stone which was to transmute base metals to gold, and an elixir of immortality; they found the methods of modern experimental science which promise in the end to give man illimitable power over the world and over his own destiny.

45

The Development of Latin Christendom

It is worth while to note the extremely shrunken dimensions of the share of the world remaining under Aryan control in the seventh and eighth centuries. A thousand years before, the Aryan-speaking races were triumphant over all the civilized world west of China. Now the Mongol had thrust as far as Hungary, nothing of Asia remained under Aryan rule except the Byzantine dominions in Asia Minor, and all Africa was lost and nearly all Spain. The great Hellenic world had shrunken to a few possessions round the nucleus of the trading city of Constantinople, and the memory of the Roman world was kept alive by the Latin of the western Christian priests. In vivid contrast to this tale of retrogression, the Semitic tradition had risen again from subjugation and obscurity after a thousand years of darkness.

Yet the vitality of the Nordic peoples was not exhausted. Confined now to Central and North-Western Europe and terribly muddled in their social and political ideas, they were nevertheless building up gradually and steadily a new social order and preparing unconsciously for the recovery of a power even more extensive than that they had previously enjoyed.

We have told how at the beginning of the sixth century there remained no central government in western Europe at all. That world was divided up among numbers of local rulers holding their own as they could. This was too insecure a state of affairs to last; a system of co-operation and association grew up in this disorder, the feudal system, which has left its traces upon European life up to the present time. This feudal system was a sort of crystallization of society about power. Everywhere the lone man felt insecure and was prepared to barter a certain amount of his liberty for help and protection. He sought a stronger man as his lord and protector; he gave him military services and paid him dues, and in return he was confirmed in his possession of what was his. His lord again found safety in vassalage to a still greater lord. Cities also found it convenient to have feudal protectors, and monasteries and church estates bound themselves by similar ties. No doubt in many cases allegiance was claimed before it was offered; the system grew downward as well as upward. So a sort of pyramidal system grew up, varying widely in different localities, permitting at first a considerable play of violence and private warfare but making steadily for order and a

new reign of law. The pyramids grew up until some became recognizable as kingdoms. Already by the early sixth century a Frankish Kingdom existed under its founder Clovis in what is now France and the Netherlands, and presently Visigothic and Lombard and Gothic kingdoms were in existence.

The Moslim when they crossed the Pyrenees in 720 found this Frankish kingdom under the practical rule of Charles Martel, the Mayor of the Palace of a degenerate descendant of Clovis, and experienced the decisive defeat of Poitiers (732) at his hands. This Charles Martel was practically overlord of Europe north of the Alps from the Pyrenees to Hungary. He ruled over a multitude of subordinate lords speaking French- Latin, and High and Low German languages. His son Pepin extinguished the last descendants of Clovis and took the kingly state and title. His grandson Charlemagne, who began to reign in 768, found himself lord of a realm so large that he could think of reviving the title of Latin Emperor. He conquered North Italy and made himself master of Rome.

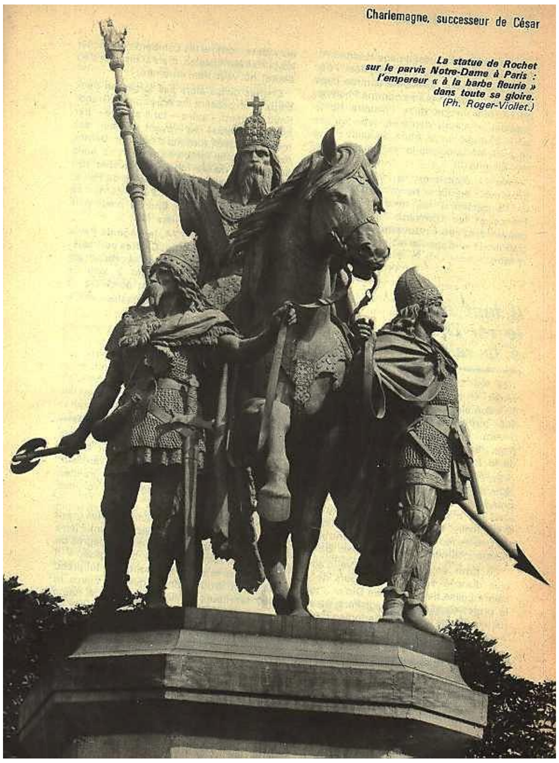


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Approaching the story of Europe as we do from the wider horizons of a world history we can see much more distinctly than the mere nationalist historian how cramping and disastrous this tradition of the Latin Roman Empire was. A narrow intense struggle for this phantom predominance was to consume European energy for more than a thousand years. Through all that period it is possible to trace certain unquenchable antagonisms; they run through the wits of Europe like the obsessions of a demented mind. One driving force was this ambition of successful rulers, which Charlemagne (Charles the Great) embodied, to become Cæsar. The realm of Charlemagne consisted of a complex of feudal German states at various stages of barbarism. West of the Rhine, most of these German peoples had learnt to speak various Latinized dialects which fused at last to form French. East of the Rhine, the racially similar German peoples did not lose their German speech. On account of this, communication was difficult between these two groups of barbarian conquerors and a split easily brought about. The split was made the more easy by the fact that the Frankish usage made it seem natural to divide the empire of Charlemagne among his sons at his death. So one aspect of the history of Europe from the days of Charlemagne onwards is a history of first this monarch and his family and then that, struggling to a precarious headship of the kings, princes, dukes, bishops, and cities of Europe, while a steadily deepening antagonism between the French and German-speaking elements develops in the medley. There was a formality of election for each emperor; and the climax of his ambition was to struggle to the possession of that worn-out, misplaced capital Rome and to a coronation there.

The next factor in the European political disorder was the resolve of the Church at Rome to make no temporal prince but the Pope of Rome himself emperor in effect. He was already *pontifex maximus*; for all practical purposes he held the decaying city; if he had no armies he had at least a vast propaganda organization in his priests throughout the whole Latin world; if he had little power over men's bodies he held the keys of heaven and hell in their imaginations and could exercise much influence upon their souls. So throughout the middle ages while one prince manœuvred against another first for equality, then for ascendancy, and at last for the supreme prize, the Pope of Rome, sometimes boldly, sometimes craftily, sometimes feebly—for the popes were a succession of oldish men and the average reign of a pope was not more than two years—manœuvred for the submission of all the princes to himself as the ultimate overlord of Christendom.

But these antagonisms of prince against prince and of emperor against pope do not by any means exhaust the factors of the European confusion. There was still an Emperor in Constantinople speaking Greek and claiming the allegiance of all Europe. When Charlemagne sought to revive the empire, it was merely the Latin end of the empire he revived. It was natural that a sense of rivalry between Latin Empire and Greek Empire should develop very readily. And still more readily did the rivalry of Greek-speaking Christianity and the newer Latin-speaking version develop. The Pope of Rome claimed to be the successor of St. Peter, the chief of the apostles of Christ, and the head of the Christian community everywhere. Neither the emperor nor the patriarch in Constantinople were disposed to acknowledge this claim. A dispute about a fine point in the doctrine of the Holy Trinity consummated a long series of dissensions in a final rupture in 1054. The Latin church and the Greek church became and remained thereafter distinct and frankly antagonistic. This antagonism must be added to the others in our estimate of the conflicts that wasted Latin Christendom in the middle ages.



Statue of Charlemagne in front of Notre Dame, Paris. The figure is entirely imaginary and romantic. There is no contemporary portrait of Charlemagne.

Upon this divided world of Christendom rained the blows of three sets of antagonists. About the Baltic and North Seas remained a series of Nordic tribes who were only very slowly and reluctantly Christianized; these were the Northmen. They had taken to the sea and piracy, and were raiding all the Christian coasts down to Spain. They had pushed up the Russian rivers to the desolate central lands and brought their shipping over into the south-flowing rivers. They had come out upon the Caspian and Black Seas as pirates also. They set up principalities in Russia; they were the first people to be called Russians. These Northmen Russians came near to taking Constantinople. England in the early ninth century was a Christianized Low German country under a king, Egbert, a protégé and pupil of Charlemagne. The Northmen wrested half the kingdom from his successor Alfred the Great (886), and finally under Canute (1016) made themselves masters of the whole land. Under Rolph the Ganger (912) another band of Northmen conquered the north of France, which became Normandy.

Canute ruled not only over England but over Norway and Denmark, but his brief empire fell to pieces at his death through that political weakness of the barbaric peoples—division among a ruler's sons. It is interesting to speculate what might have happened if this temporary union of the Northmen had endured. They were a race of astonishing boldness and energy. They sailed in their galleys even to Iceland and Greenland. They were the first Europeans to land on American soil. Later on Norman adventurers were to recover Sicily from the Saracens and sack Rome. It is a fascinating thing to imagine what a great northern sea-faring power might have grown out of Canute's kingdom, reaching from America to Russia.

To the east of the Germans and Latinized Europeans was a medley of Slav tribes and Turkish peoples. Prominent among these were the Magyars or Hungarians who were coming westward throughout the eighth and ninth centuries. Charlemagne held them for a time, but after his death they established themselves in what is now Hungary; and after the fashion of their kindred predecessors, the Huns, raided every summer into the settled parts of Europe. In 938 they went through Germany into France, crossed the Alps into North Italy, and so came home, burning, robbing and destroying.

Finally, pounding away from the south at the vestiges of the Roman Empire were the Saracens. They had made themselves largely masters of the sea; their only formidable adversaries upon the water were the Northmen, the Russian Northmen out of the Black Sea and the Northmen of the west.



Hemmed in by these more vigorous and aggressive peoples, amidst forces they did not understand and dangers they could not estimate, Charlemagne and after him a series of other ambitious spirits took up the futile drama of restoring the Western Empire under the name of the Holy Roman Empire. From the time of Charlemagne onward this idea obsessed the political life of Western Europe, while in the East the Greek half of the Roman power decayed and dwindled until at last nothing remained of it at all but the corrupt trading city of Constantinople and a few miles of territory about it. Politically the continent of Europe remained traditional and uncreative from the time of Charlemagne onward for a thousand years.

The name of Charlemagne looms large in European history, but his personality is but indistinctly seen. He could not read or write, but he had a considerable respect for learning; he liked to be read aloud to at meals and he had a weakness for theological discussion. At his winter quarters at Aix-la- Chapelle or Mayence he gathered about him a number of learned men and picked up much from their conversation. In the summer he made war, against the Spanish Saracens, against the Slavs and Magyars, against the Saxons, and other still heathen German tribes. It is

doubtful whether the idea of becoming Cæsar in succession to Romulus Augustulus occurred to him before his acquisition of North Italy, or whether it was suggested to him by Pope Leo III, who was anxious to make the Latin church independent of Constantinople.

There were the most extraordinary manœuvres at Rome between the Pope and the prospective emperor in order to make it appear or not appear as if the Pope gave him the imperial crown. The Pope succeeded in crowning his visitor and conqueror by surprise in St. Peter's on Christmas Day A.D. 800. He produced a crown, put it on the head of Charlemagne and hailed him Cæsar and Augustus. There was great applause among the people. Charlemagne was by no means pleased at the way in which the thing was done, it rankled in his mind as a defeat; and he left the most careful instructions to his son that he was not to let the Pope crown him Emperor; he was to seize the crown into his own hands and put it on his own head himself. So at the very outset of this Imperial revival we see beginning the age-long dispute of pope and emperor for priority. But Louis the Pious, the son of Charlemagne, disregarded his father's instructions and was entirely submissive to the Pope.

The empire of Charlemagne fell apart at the death of Louis the Pious, and the split between the French-speaking Franks and the German-speaking Franks widened. The next emperor to arise was Otto, the son of a certain Henry the Fowler, a Saxon, who had been elected King of Germany by an assembly of German princes and prelates in 919. Otto descended upon Rome and was crowned emperor there in 962. This Saxon line came to an end early in the eleventh century and gave place to other German rulers. The feudal princes and nobles to the west who spoke various French dialects did not fall under the sway of these German emperors after the Carlovingian line, the line that is descended from Charlemagne, had come to an end, and no part of Britain ever came into the Holy Roman Empire. The Duke of Normandy, the King of France, and a number of lesser feudal rulers remained outside. In 987 the Kingdom of France passed out of the possession of the Carlovingian line into the hands of Hugh Capet, whose descendants were still reigning in the eighteenth century. At the time of Hugh Capet, the King of France ruled only a comparatively small territory round Paris.

In 1066 England was attacked almost simultaneously by an invasion of the Norwegian Northmen under King Harold Hardrada and by the Latinized Northmen under the Duke of Normandy. Harold King of England defeated the former at the battle of Stamford Bridge, and was defeated by the latter at Hastings. England was

conquered by the Normans, and so cut off from Scandinavian, Teutonic, and Russian affairs, and brought into the most intimate relations and conflicts with the French. For the next four centuries the English were entangled in the conflicts of the French feudal princes and wasted upon the fields of France.

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The Crusades and the Age of Papal Dominion

It is interesting to note that Charlemagne corresponded with the Caliph Haroun-al-Raschid, the Haroun-al-Raschid of the *Arabian Nights*. It is recorded that Haroun-al-Raschid sent ambassadors from Bagdad—which had now replaced Damascus as the Moslem capital—with a splendid tent, a water clock, an elephant and the keys of the Holy Sepulchre. This latter present was admirably calculated to set the Byzantine Empire and this new Holy Roman Empire by the ears as to which was the proper protector of the Christians in Jerusalem.

These presents remind us that while Europe in the ninth century was still a weltering disorder of war and pillage, there flourished a great Arab Empire in Egypt and Mesopotamia, far more civilized than anything Europe could show. Here literature and science still lived; the arts flourished, and the mind of man could move without fear or superstition. And even in Spain and North Africa where the Saracenic dominions were falling into political confusion there was a vigorous intellectual life. Aristotle was read and discussed by these Jews and Arabs during these centuries of European darkness. They guarded the neglected seeds of science and philosophy.

North east of the Caliph's dominions was a number of Turkish tribes. They had been converted to Islam, and they held the faith much more simply and fiercely than the actively intellectual Arabs and Persians to the south. In the tenth century the Turks were growing strong and vigorous while the Arab power was divided and decaying. The relations of the Turks to the Empire of the Caliphate became very similar to the relations of the Medes to the last Babylonian Empire fourteen centuries before. In the eleventh century a group of Turkish tribes, the Seljuk Turks, came down into Mesopotamia and made the Caliph their nominal ruler but really their captive and tool. They conquered Armenia. Then they struck at the remnants of the Byzantine power in Asia Minor. In 1071 the Byzantine army was utterly smashed at the battle of Melasgird, and the Turks swept forward until not a trace of Byzantine rule remained in Asia. They took the fortress of Nicæa over against Constantinople, and prepared to attempt that city.

The Byzantine emperor, Michael VII, was overcome with terror. He was already

heavily engaged in warfare with a band of Norman adventurers who had seized Durazzo, and with a fierce Turkish people, the Petschenegs, who were raiding over the Danube. In his extremity he sought help where he could, and it is notable that he did not appeal to the western emperor but to the Pope of Rome as the head of Latin Christendom. He wrote to Pope Gregory VII, and his successor Alexius Comnenus wrote still more urgently to Urban II.



Crusader tombs in Exeter cathedral

This was not a quarter of a century from the rupture of the Latin and Greek churches. That controversy was still vividly alive in men's minds, and this disaster to Byzantium must have presented itself to the pope as a supreme opportunity for reasserting the supremacy of the Latin Church over the dissentient Greeks. Moreover this occasion gave the Pope a chance to deal with two other matters that troubled western Christendom very greatly. One was the custom of "private war" which disordered social life, and the other was the superabundant fighting energy of the Low Germans and Christianized Northmen and particularly of the Franks and Normans. A religious war, the Crusade, the War of the Cross, was preached against the Turkish captors of Jerusalem, and a truce to all warfare amongst Christians (1095). The

declared object of this war was the recovery of the Holy Sepulchre from the unbelievers. A man called Peter the Hermit carried on a popular propaganda throughout France and Germany on broadly democratic lines. He went clad in a coarse garment, barefooted on an ass, he carried a huge cross and harangued the crowd in street or market place or church. He denounced the cruelties practised upon the Christian pilgrims by the Turks, and the shame of the Holy Sepulchre being in any but Christian hands. The fruits of centuries of Christian teaching became apparent in the response. A great wave of enthusiasm swept the western world, and popular Christendom discovered itself.



View of Cairo

Such a widespread uprising of the common people in relation to a single idea as now occurred, was a new thing in the history of our race. There is nothing to parallel it in the previous history of the Roman Empire or of India or China. On a smaller scale however there had been similar movements among the Jewish people after their liberation from the Babylonian captivity, and later on Islam was to display a parallel susceptibility to collective feeling. Such movements were certainly connected with the

new spirit that had come into life with the development of the missionary- teaching religions. The Hebrew prophets, Jesus and his disciples, Mani, Muhammad, were all exhorters of men's individual souls. They brought the personal conscience face to face with God. Before that time religion had been much more a business of fetish, of pseudo-science, than of conscience. The old kind of religion turned upon temple, initiated priest and mystical sacrifice, and ruled the common man like a slave by fear. The new kind of religion made a man of him.

The preaching of the First Crusade was the first stirring of the common people in European history. It may be too much to call it the birth of modern democracy, but certainly at that time modern democracy stirred. Before very long we shall find it stirring again, and raising the most disturbing social and religious questions.

Certainly this first stirring of democracy ended very pitifully and lamentably. Considerable bodies of common people, crowds rather than armies, set out eastward from France and the Rhineland and Central Europe without waiting for leaders or proper equipment to rescue the Holy Sepulchre. This was the "people's crusade." Two great mobs blundered into Hungary, mistook the recently converted Magyars for pagans, committed atrocities and were massacred. A third multitude with a similarly confused mind, after a great pogrom of the Jews in the Rhineland, marched eastward, and was also destroyed in Hungary. Two other huge crowds, under the leadership of Peter the Hermit himself, reached Constantinople, crossed the Bosphorus, and were massacred rather than defeated by the Seljuk Turks. So began and ended this first movement of the European people, as people.

Next year (1097) the real fighting forces crossed the Bosphorus. Essentially they were Norman in leadership and spirit. They stormed Nicæa, marched by much the same route as Alexander had followed fourteen centuries before, to Antioch. The siege of Antioch kept them a year, and in June 1099 they invested Jerusalem. It was stormed after a month's siege. The slaughter was terrible. Men riding on horseback were splashed by the blood in the streets. At nightfall on July 15th the Crusaders had fought their way into the Church of the Holy Sepulchre and overcome all opposition there: blood-stained, weary, and "sobbing from excess of joy" they knelt down in prayer.

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The horses of St. Mark, Venice

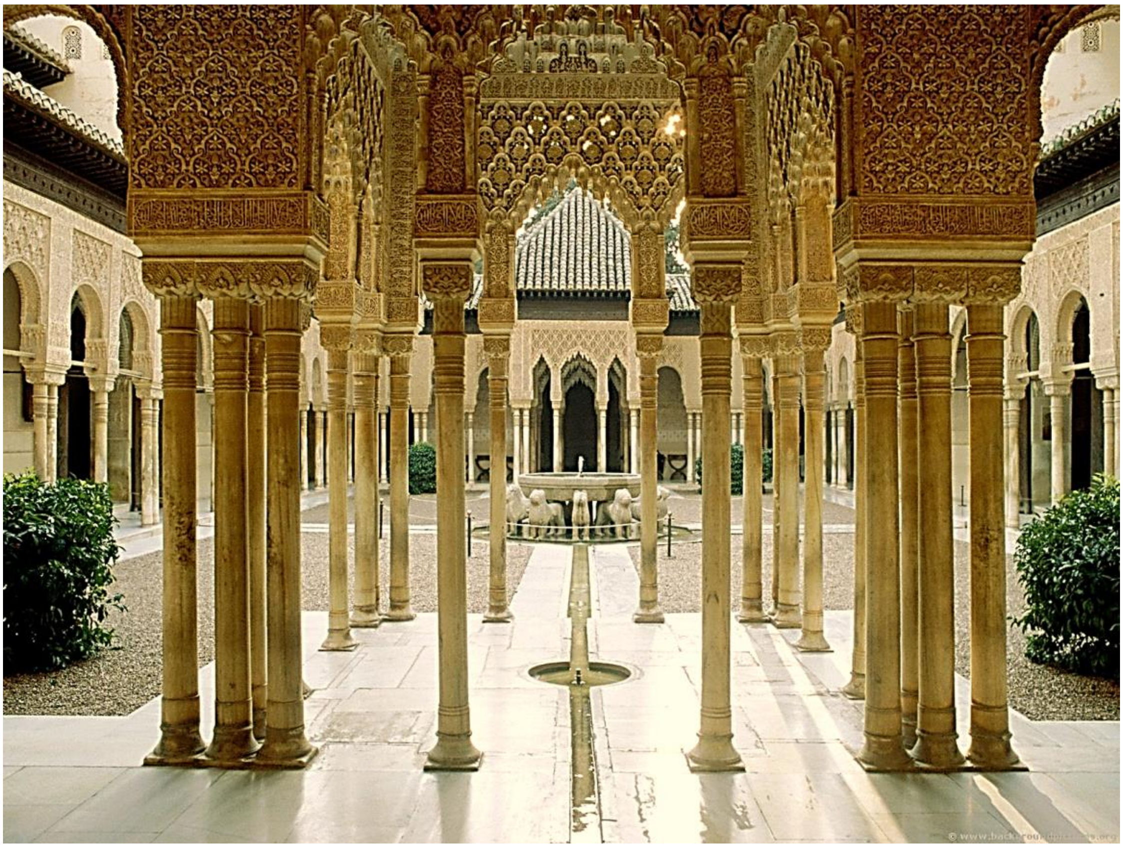
Originally on the arch of Trajan at Constantinople, the Doge Dandalo V took them after the Fourth Crusade, to Venice, whence Napoleon I removed them to Paris, but in 1815 they were returned to Venice. During the Great War of 1914-18 they were hidden away for fear of air raids.

Immediately the hostility of Latin and Greek broke out again. The crusaders were the servants of the Latin Church, and the Greek patriarch of Jerusalem found himself in a far worse case under the triumphant Latins than under the Turks. The crusaders discovered themselves between Byzantine and Turk and fighting both. Much of Asia Minor was recovered by the Byzantine Empire, and the Latin princes were left, a buffer between Turk and Greek, with Jerusalem and a few small principalities, of which Edessa was one of the chief, in Syria. Their grip even on these possessions was precarious, and in 1144 Edessa fell to the Moslim, leading to an ineffective Second Crusade, which failed to recover Edessa but saved Antioch from a similar fate.

In 1169 the forces of Islam were rallied under a Kurdish adventurer named Saladin who had made himself master of Egypt. He preached a Holy War against the Christians, recaptured Jerusalem in 1187, and so provoked the Third Crusade. This failed to recover Jerusalem. In the Fourth Crusade (1202-4) the Latin Church turned

frankly upon the Greek empire, and there was not even a pretence of fighting the Turks. It started from Venice and in 1204 it stormed Constantinople. The great rising trading city of Venice was the leader in this adventure, and most of the coasts and islands of the Byzantine Empire were annexed by the Venetians. A "Latin" emperor (Baldwin of Flanders) was set up in Constantinople and the Latin and Greek Church were declared to be reunited. The Latin emperors ruled in Constantinople from 1204 to 1261 when the Greek world shook itself free again from Roman predominance.

The twelfth century then and the opening of the thirteenth was the age of papal ascendancy just as the eleventh was the age of the ascendancy of the Seljuk Turks and the tenth the age of the Northmen. A united Christendom under the rule of the pope came nearer to being a working reality than it ever was before or after that time.



A courtyard in the Alhambra

In those centuries a simple Christian faith was real and widespread over great areas of Europe. Rome itself had passed through some dark and discreditable phases; few writers can be found to excuse the lives of Popes John XI and John XII in the tenth

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century; they were abominable creatures; but the heart and body of Latin Christendom had remained earnest and simple; the generality of the common priests and monks and nuns had lived exemplary and faithful lives. Upon the wealth of confidence such lives created rested the power of the Church. Among the great popes of the past had been Gregory the Great, Gregory I (590-604) and Leo III (795-816), who invited Charlemagne to be Cæsar and crowned him in spite of himself. Towards the close of the eleventh century there arose a great clerical statesman, Hildebrand, who ended his life as Pope Gregory VII (1073- 1085). Next but one after him came Urban II (1087-1099), the pope of the First Crusade. These two were the founders of this period of papal greatness during which the popes lorded it over the emperors. From Bulgaria to Ireland and from Norway to Sicily and Jerusalem the pope was supreme. Gregory VII obliged the emperor Henry IV to come in penitence to him at Canossa and to await forgiveness for three days and nights in the courtyard of the castle, clad in sackcloth and barefooted to the snow. In 1176 at Venice the Emperor Frederick (Frederick Barbarossa) knelt to Pope Alexander III and swore fealty to him.

The great power of the church in the beginning of the eleventh century lay in the wills and consciences of men. It failed to retain the moral prestige on which its power was based. In the opening decades of the fourteenth century it was discovered that the power of the pope had evaporated. What was it that destroyed the naive confidence of the common people of Christendom in the church so that they would no longer rally to its appeal and serve its purposes?

The first trouble was certainly the accumulation of wealth by the church. The church never died, and there was a frequent disposition on the part of dying childless people to leave lands to the church. Penitent sinners were exhorted to do so. Accordingly in many European countries as much as a fourth of the land became church property. The appetite for property grows with what it feeds upon. Already in the thirteenth century it was being said everywhere that the priests were not good men, that they were always hunting for money and legacies.

The kings and princes disliked this alienation of property very greatly. In the place of feudal lords capable of military support, they found their land supporting abbeys and monks and nuns. And these lands were really under foreign dominion. Even before the time of Pope Gregory VII there had been a struggle between the princes and the papacy over the question of "investitures," the question that is of who should appoint the bishops. If that power rested with the pope and not the king, then the latter lost control not only of the consciences of his subjects but of a considerable

part of his dominions. For also, the clergy claimed exemption from taxation. They paid their taxes to Rome. And not only that, but the church also claimed the right to levy a tax of one-tenth upon the property of the layman in addition to the taxes he paid his prince.

The history of nearly every country in Latin Christendom tells of the same phase in the eleventh century, a phase of struggle between monarch and pope on the issue of investitures and generally it tells of a victory for the pope. He claimed to be able to excommunicate the prince, to absolve his subjects from their allegiance to him, to recognize a successor. He claimed to be able to put a nation under an interdict, and then nearly all priestly functions ceased except the sacraments of baptism, confirmation and penance; the priests could neither hold the ordinary services, marry people, nor bury the dead. With these two weapons it was possible for the twelfth century popes to curb the most recalcitrant princes and overawe the most restive peoples. These were enormous powers, and enormous powers are only to be used on extraordinary occasions. The popes used them at last with a frequency that staled their effect. Within thirty years at the end of the twelfth century we find Scotland, France and England in turn under an interdict. And also the popes could not resist the temptation to preach crusades against offending princes—until the crusading spirit was extinct.

It is possible that if the Church of Rome had struggled simply against the princes and had had a care to keep its hold upon the general mind, it might have achieved a permanent dominion over all Christendom. But the high claims of the pope were reflected as arrogance in the conduct of the clergy. Before the eleventh century the Roman priests could marry; they had close ties with the people among whom they lived; they were indeed a part of the people. Gregory VII made them celibates; he cut the priests off from too great an intimacy with the laymen in order to bind them more closely to Rome, but indeed he opened a fissure between the church and the commonalty. The church had its own law courts. Cases involving not merely priests but monks, students, crusaders, widows, orphans and the helpless were reserved for the clerical courts, and so were all matters relating to wills, marriages and oaths and all cases of sorcery, heresy and blasphemy. Whenever the layman found himself in conflict with the priest he had to go to a clerical court. The obligations of peace and war fell upon his shoulders alone and left the priest free. It is no great wonder that jealousy and hatred of the priests grew up in the Christian world.

Never did Rome seem to realize that its power was in the consciences of common

men. It fought against religious enthusiasm, which should have been its ally, and it forced doctrinal orthodoxy upon honest doubt and aberrant opinion. When the church interfered in matters of morality it had the common man with it, but not when it interfered in matters of doctrine. When in the south of France Waldo taught a return to the simplicity of Jesus in faith and life, Innocent III preached a crusade against the Waldenses, Waldo's followers, and permitted them to be suppressed with fire, sword, rape and the most abominable cruelties. When again St. Francis of Assisi (1181-1226) taught the imitation of Christ and a life of poverty and service, his followers, the Franciscans, were persecuted, scourged, imprisoned and dispersed. In 1318 four of them were burnt alive at Marseilles. On the other hand the fiercely orthodox order of the Dominicans, founded by St. Dominic (1170-1221) was strongly supported by Innocent III, who with its assistance set up an organization, the Inquisition, for the hunting of heresy and the affliction of free thought.

So it was that the church by excessive claims, by unrighteous privileges, and by an irrational intolerance destroyed that free faith of the common man which was the final source of all its power. The story of its decline tells of no adequate foemen from without but continually of decay from within.

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Recalcitrant Princes and the Great Schism

One very great weakness of the Roman Church in its struggle to secure the headship of all Christendom was the manner in which the Pope was chosen.

If indeed the papacy was to achieve its manifest ambition and establish one rule and one peace throughout Christendom then it was vitally necessary that it should have a strong, steady and continuous direction. In those great days of its opportunity it needed before all things that the popes when they took office should be able men in the prime of life, that each should have his successor-designate with whom he could discuss the policy of the church, and that the forms and processes of election should be clear, definite, unalterable and unassailable. Unhappily none of these things obtained. It was not even clear who could vote in the election of a pope, nor whether the Byzantine or Holy Roman Emperor had a voice in the matter. That very great papal statesman Hildebrand (Pope Gregory VII, 1073-1085) did much to regularize the election. He confined the votes to the Roman Cardinals and he reduced the Emperor's share to a formula of assent conceded to him by the church, but he made no provision for a successor-designate and he left it possible for the disputes of the Cardinals to keep the See vacant, as in some cases it was kept vacant, for a year or more.

The consequences of this want of firm definition are to be seen in the whole history of the papacy up to the sixteenth century. From quite early times onward there were disputed elections and two or more men each claiming to be pope. The church would then be subjected to the indignity of going to the Emperor or some other outside arbiter to settle the dispute. And the career of every one of the great popes ended in a note of interrogation. At his death the church might be left headless and as ineffective as a decapitated body. Or he might be replaced by some old rival eager only to discredit and undo his work. Or some enfeebled old man tottering on the brink of the grave might succeed him.

It was inevitable that this peculiar weakness of the papal organization should attract the interference of the various German princes, the French King, and the Norman and French Kings who ruled in England; that they should all try to influence the elections, and have a pope in their own interest established in the Lateran Palace at Rome. And the more powerful and important the pope became in European affairs,

the more urgent did these interventions become. Under the circumstances it is no great wonder that many of the popes were weak and futile. The astonishing thing is that many of them were able and courageous men.



Milan cathedral.
View showing the exquisite carvings characteristic of the 98 spires of the edifice.

One of the most vigorous and interesting of the popes of this great period was Innocent III (1198-1216), who was so fortunate as to become pope before he was thirty-eight. He and his successors were pitted against an even more interesting personality, the Emperor Frederick II; *Stupor mundi* he was called, the Wonder of the world. The struggle of this monarch against Rome is a turning place in history. In the end Rome defeated him and destroyed his dynasty, but he left the prestige of the church and pope so badly wounded that its wounds festered and led to its decay.

Frederick was the son of the Emperor Henry VI and his mother was the daughter of Roger I, the Norman King of Sicily. He inherited this kingdom in 1198 when he was a child of four years. Innocent III had been made his guardian. Sicily in those days had been but recently conquered by the Normans; the Court was half oriental and full of highly educated Arabs; and some of these were associated in the education of the young king. No doubt they were at some pains to make their point of view clear to him. He got a Moslem view of Christianity as well as a Christian view of Islam, and the unhappy result of this double system of instruction was a view, exceptional in that age of faith, that all religions were impostures. He talked freely on the subject; his heresies and blasphemies are on record.

As the young man grew up he found himself in conflict with his guardian. Innocent III wanted altogether too much from his ward. When the opportunity came for Frederick to succeed as Emperor, the pope intervened with conditions. Frederick must promise to put down heresy in Germany with a strong hand. Moreover he must relinquish his crown in Sicily and South Italy, because otherwise he would be too strong for the pope. And the German clergy were to be freed from all taxation. Frederick agreed but with no intention of keeping his word. The pope had already induced the French King to make war upon his own subjects in France, the cruel and bloody crusade against the Waldenses; he wanted Frederick to do the same thing in Germany. But Frederick being far more of a heretic than any of the simple pietists who had incurred the pope's animosity, lacked the crusading impulse. And when Innocent urged him to crusade against the Moslim and recover Jerusalem he was equally ready to promise and equally slack in his performance.



A typical crusader: Don Rodrigo de Cardenas.
From the Church of S. Pedro at Ocana, Spain
(In the Victoria and Albert Museum)

Having secured the imperial crown Frederick II stayed in Sicily, which he greatly preferred to Germany as a residence, and did nothing to redeem any of his promises to Innocent III, who died baffled in 1216.

Honorius III, who succeeded Innocent, could do no better with Frederick, and Gregory IX (1227) came to the papal throne evidently resolved to settle accounts with this young man at any cost. He excommunicated him. Frederick II was denied all the comforts of religion. In the half-Arab Court of Sicily this produced singularly little discomfort. And also the pope addressed a public letter to the Emperor reciting his vices (which were indisputable), his heresies, and his general misconduct. To this

Frederick replied in a document of diabolical ability. It was addressed to all the princes of Europe, and it made the first clear statement of the issue between the pope and the princes. He made a shattering attack upon the manifest ambition of the pope to become the absolute ruler of all Europe. He suggested a union of princes against this usurpation. He directed the attention of the princes specifically to the wealth of the church.

Having fired off this deadly missile Frederick resolved to perform his twelve-year-old promise and go upon a crusade. This was the Sixth Crusade (1228). It was, as a crusade, farcical. Frederick II went to Egypt, and met and discussed affairs with the Sultan. These two gentlemen, both of sceptical opinions, exchanged congenial views, made a commercial convention to their mutual advantage, and agreed to transfer Jerusalem to Frederick. This indeed was a new sort of crusade, a crusade by private treaty. Here was no blood splashing the conqueror, no "weeping with excess of joy." As this astonishing crusader was an excommunicated man, he had to be content with a purely secular coronation as King of Jerusalem, taking the crown from the altar with his own hand—for all the clergy were bound to shun him. He then returned to Italy, chased the papal armies which had invaded his dominions back to their own territories, and obliged the pope to grant him absolution from his excommunication. So a prince might treat the pope in the thirteenth century, and there was now no storm of popular indignation to avenge him. Those days were past.

In 1239 Gregory IX resumed his struggle with Frederick, excommunicated him for a second time and renewed that warfare of public abuse in which the papacy had already suffered severely. The controversy was revived after Gregory IX was dead, when Innocent IV was pope; and again a devastating letter, which men were bound to remember, was written by Frederick against the church. He denounced the pride and irreligion of the clergy, and ascribed all the corruptions of the time to their pride and wealth. He proposed to his fellow princes a general confiscation of church property—for the good of the church. It was a suggestion that never afterwards left the imagination of the European princes.

We will not go on to tell of his last years. The particular events of his life are far less significant than its general atmosphere. It is possible to piece together something of his court life in Sicily. He was luxurious in his way of living, and fond of beautiful things. He is described as licentious. But it is clear that he was a man of very effectual curiosity and inquiry. He gathered Jewish and Moslem as well as Christian philosophers at his court, and he did much to irrigate the Italian mind with Saracenic

influences. Through him the Arabic numerals and algebra were introduced to Christian students, and among other philosophers at his court was Michael Scott, who translated portions of Aristotle and the commentaries thereon of the great Arab philosopher Averroes (of Cordoba). In 1224 Frederick founded the University of Naples, and he enlarged and enriched the great medical school at Salerno University. He also founded a zoological garden. He left a book on hawking, which shows him to have been an acute observer of the habits of birds, and he was one of the first Italians to write Italian verse. Italian poetry was indeed born at his court. He has been called by an able writer, "the first of the moderns," and the phrase expresses aptly the unprejudiced detachment of his intellectual side.

A still more striking intimation of the decay of the living and sustaining forces of the papacy appeared when presently the Popes came into conflict with the growing power of the French King. During the lifetime of the Emperor Frederick II, Germany fell into disunion, and the French King began to play the rôle of guard, supporter and rival to the Pope that had hitherto fallen to the Hohenstaufen emperors. A series of Popes pursued the policy of supporting the French monarchs. French princes were established in the kingdom of Sicily and Naples, with the support and approval of Rome, and the French Kings saw before them the possibility of restoring and ruling the Empire of Charlemagne. When, however, the German interregnum after the death of Frederick II, the last of the Hohenstaufens, came to an end and Rudolf of Habsburg was elected first Habsburg Emperor (1273), the policy of Rome began to fluctuate between France and Germany, veering about with the sympathies of each successive pope. In the East in 1261 the Greeks recaptured Constantinople from the Latin emperors, and the founder of the new Greek dynasty, Michael Palæologus, Michael VIII, after some unreal tentatives of reconciliation with the Pope, broke away from the Roman communion altogether, and with that, and the fall of the Latin kingdoms in Asia, the eastward ascendancy of the Popes came to an end.



Costumes of the Burgundian nobility: Flemish work of the fifteenth century

In 1294 Boniface VIII became Pope. He was an Italian, hostile to the French, and full of a sense of the great traditions and mission of Rome. For a time he carried things with a high hand. In 1300 he held a jubilee, and a vast multitude of pilgrims assembled in Rome. "So great was the influx of money into the papal treasury, that two assistants were kept busy with the rakes collecting the offerings that were deposited at the tomb of St. Peter."[1] But this festival was a delusive triumph. Boniface came into conflict with the French king in 1302, and in 1303, as he was about to pronounce sentence of excommunication against that monarch, he was surprised and arrested in his own ancestral palace at Anagni, by Guillaume de Nogaret. This agent from the French King forced an entrance into the palace, made his way into the bedroom of the frightened Pope—he was lying in bed with a cross in his hands—and heaped threats and insults upon him. The Pope was liberated a day or so later by the townspeople, and returned to Rome; but there he was seized upon and again made prisoner by the Orsini family, and in a few weeks' time the shocked and disillusioned old man died a prisoner in their hands.

[1] J. H. Robinson.



Costumes of the Burgundian nobility: Flemish work of the fifteenth century.
This series is from casts in the Victoria and Albert Museum of the original brass statuettes in the Rijks Museum, Amsterdam.

The people of Anagni did resent the first outrage, and rose against Nogaret to liberate Boniface, but then Anagni was the Pope's native town. The important point to note is that the French King in this rough treatment of the head of Christendom, was acting with the full approval of his people; he had summoned a council of the Three Estates of France (lords, church and commons) and gained their consent before proceeding to extremities. Neither in Italy, Germany, nor England was there the slightest general manifestation of disapproval at this free handling of the sovereign pontiff. The idea of Christendom had decayed until its power over the minds of men had gone.

Throughout the fourteenth century the papacy did nothing to recover its moral sway. The next Pope elected, Clement V, was a Frenchman, the choice of King Philip of France. He never came to Rome. He set up his court in the town of Avignon, which then belonged not to France but to the papal See, though embedded in French territory, and there his successors remained until 1377, when Pope Gregory XI returned to the Vatican palace in Rome. But Gregory XI did not take the sympathies of the whole church with him. Many of the cardinals were of French origin and their habits and associations were rooted deep at Avignon. When in 1378 Gregory XI died, and an Italian, Urban VI, was elected, these dissentient cardinals declared the election

invalid, and elected another Pope, the anti-Pope, Clement VII. This split is called the Great Schism. The Popes remained in Rome, and all the anti-French powers, the Emperor, the King of England, Hungary, Poland, and the North of Europe were loyal to them. The anti-Popes, on the other hand, continued in Avignon, and were supported by the King of France, his ally the King of Scotland, Spain, Portugal, and various German princes. Each Pope excommunicated and cursed the adherents of his rival (1378-1417).

Is it any wonder that presently all over Europe people began to think for themselves in matters of religion?

The beginnings of the Franciscans and the Dominicans, which we have noted in the preceding chapters, were but two among many of the new forces that were arising in Christendom, either to hold or shatter the church, as its own wisdom might decide. Those two orders the church did assimilate and use, though with a little violence in the case of the former. But other forces were more frankly disobedient and critical. A century and a half later came Wycliffe (1320-1384). He was a learned Doctor at Oxford. Quite late in his life he began a series of outspoken criticisms of the corruption of the clergy and the unwisdom of the church. He organized a number of poor priests, the Wycliffites, to spread his ideas throughout England; and in order that people should judge between the church and himself, he translated the Bible into English. He was a more learned and far abler man than either St. Francis or St. Dominic. He had supporters in high places and a great following among the people; and though Rome raged against him, and ordered his imprisonment, he died a free man. But the black and ancient spirit that was leading the Catholic church to its destruction would not let his bones rest in the grave. By a decree of the Council of Constance in 1415, his remains were ordered to be dug up and burnt, an order which was carried out at the command of Pope Martin V by Bishop Fleming in 1428. This desecration was not the act of some isolated fanatic; it was the official act of the church.

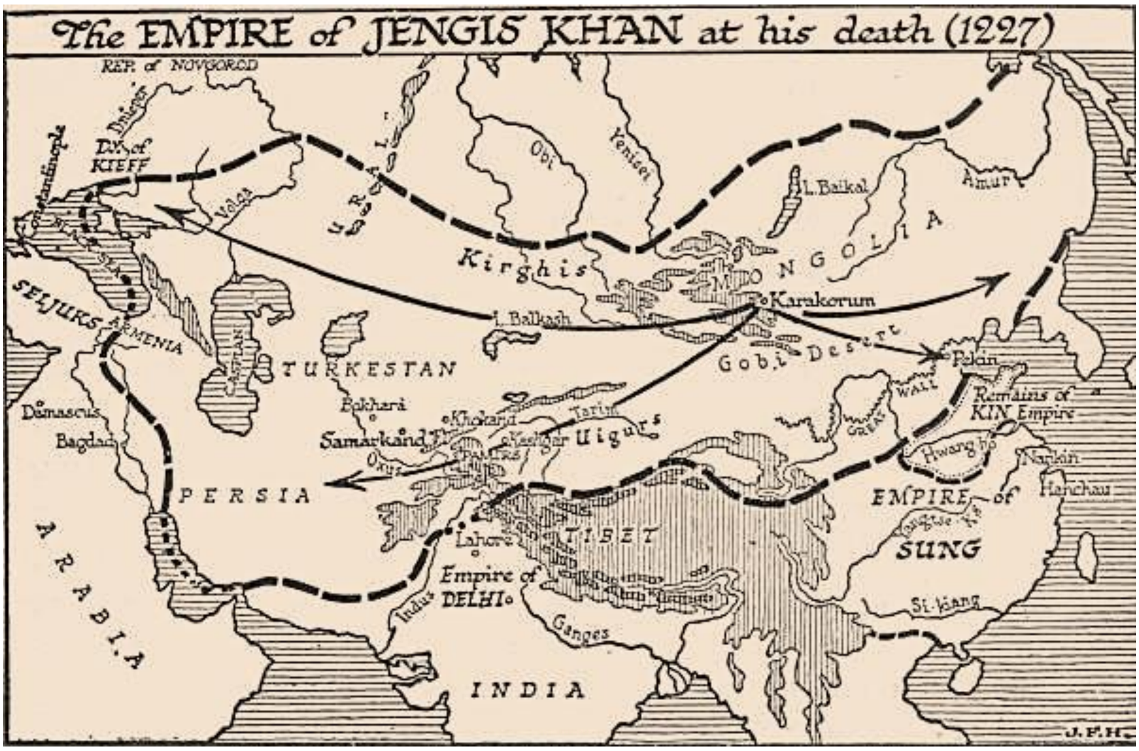
48

The Mongol Conquests

But in the thirteenth century, while this strange and finally ineffectual struggle to unify Christendom under the rule of the Pope was going on in Europe, far more momentous events were afoot upon the larger stage of Asia. A Turkish people from the country to the north of China rose suddenly to prominence in the world's affairs, and achieved such a series of conquests as has no parallel in history. These were the Mongols. At the opening of the thirteenth century they were a horde of nomadic horsemen, living very much as their predecessors, the Huns, had done, subsisting chiefly upon meat and mare's milk and living in tents of skin. They had shaken themselves free from Chinese dominion, and brought a number of other Turkish tribes into a military confederacy. Their central camp was at Karakorum in Mongolia.

At this time China was in a state of division. The great dynasty of Tang had passed into decay by the tenth century, and after a phase of division into warring states, three main empires, that of Kin in the north with Pekin as its capital and that of Sung in the south with a capital at Nankin, and Hsia in the centre, remained. In 1214 Jengis Khan, the leader of the Mongol confederates, made war on the Kin Empire and captured Pekin (1214). He then turned westward and conquered Western Turkestan, Persia, Armenia, India down to Lahore, and South Russia as far as Kieff. He died master of a vast empire that reached from the Pacific to the Dnieper.

His successor, Ogdai Khan, continued this astonishing career of conquest. His armies were organized to a very high level of efficiency; and they had with them a new Chinese invention, gunpowder, which they used in small field guns. He completed the conquest of the Kin Empire and then swept his hosts right across Asia to Russia (1235), an altogether amazing march. Kieff was destroyed in 1240, and nearly all Russia became tributary to the Mongols. Poland was ravaged, and a mixed army of Poles and Germans was annihilated at the battle of Liegnitz in Lower Silesia in 1241. The Emperor Frederick II does not seem to have made any great efforts to stay the advancing tide.



"It is only recently," says Bury in his notes to Gibbon's *Decline and Fall of the Roman Empire*, "that European history has begun to understand that the successes of the Mongol army which overran Poland and occupied Hungary in the spring of A.D. 1241 were won by consummate strategy and were not due to a mere overwhelming superiority of numbers. But this fact has not yet become a matter of common knowledge; the vulgar opinion which represents the Tartars as a wild horde carrying all before them solely by their multitude, and galloping through Eastern Europe without a strategic plan, rushing at all obstacles and overcoming them by mere weight, still prevails...

"It was wonderful how punctually and effectually the arrangements were carried out in operations extending from the Lower Vistula to Transylvania. Such a campaign was quite beyond the power of any European army of the time, and it was beyond the vision of any European commander. There was no general in Europe, from Frederick II downward, who was not a tyro in strategy compared to Subutai. It should also be noticed that the Mongols embarked upon the enterprise with full knowledge of the political situation of Hungary and the condition of Poland—they had taken care to inform themselves by a well-organized system of spies; on the other hand, the Hungarians and the Christian powers, like childish barbarians, knew hardly anything

about their enemies."



But though the Mongols were victorious at Liegnitz, they did not continue their drive westward. They were getting into woodlands and hilly country, which did not suit their tactics; and so they turned southward and prepared to settle in Hungary, massacring or assimilating the kindred Magyar, even as these had previously massacred and assimilated the mixed Scythians and Avars and Huns before them. From the Hungarian plain they would probably have made raids west and south as the Hungarians had done in the ninth century, the Avars in the seventh and eighth and the Huns in the fifth. But Ogdai died suddenly, and in 1242 there was trouble about the succession, and recalled by this, the undefeated hosts of Mongols began to pour back across Hungary and Rumania towards the east.

Thereafter the Mongols concentrated their attention upon their Asiatic conquests. By the middle of the thirteenth century they had conquered the Sung empire. Mangu Khan succeeded Ogdai Khan as Great Khan in 1251, and made his brother Kublai Khan governor of China. In 1280 Kublai Khan had been formally recognized Emperor of China, and so founded the Yuan dynasty which lasted until 1368. While the last

ruins of the Sung rule were going down in China, another brother of Mangu, Hulagu, was conquering Persia and Syria. The Mongols displayed a bitter animosity to Islam at this time, and not only massacred the population of Bagdad when they captured that city, but set to work to destroy the immemorial irrigation system which had kept Mesopotamia incessantly prosperous and populous from the early days of Sumeria. From that time until our own Mesopotamia has been a desert of ruins, sustaining only a scanty population. Into Egypt the Mongols never penetrated; the Sultan of Egypt completely defeated an army of Hulagu's in Palestine in 1260.

After that disaster the tide of Mongol victory ebbed. The dominions of the Great Khan fell into a number of separate states. The eastern Mongols became Buddhists, like the Chinese; the western became Moslim. The Chinese threw off the rule of the Yuan dynasty in 1368, and set up the native Ming dynasty which flourished from 1368 to 1644. The Russians remained tributary to the Tartar hordes upon the south-east steppes until 1480, when the Grand Duke of Moscow repudiated his allegiance and laid the foundation of modern Russia.



Tartar horsemen
(From a Chinese print)

In the fourteenth century there was a brief revival of Mongol vigour under Timurlane, a descendant of Jengis Khan. He established himself in Western Turkestan, assumed the title of Grand Khan in 1369, and conquered from Syria to Delhi. He was the most savage and destructive of all the Mongol conquerors. He established an empire of desolation that did not survive his death. In 1505, however, a descendant of this Timur, an adventurer named Baber, got together an army with guns and swept down upon the plains of India. His grandson Akbar (1556-1605) completed his conquests, and this Mongol (or "Mogul" as the Arabs called it) dynasty ruled in Delhi over the greater part of India until the eighteenth century.



One of the consequences of the first great sweep of Mongol conquest in the thirteenth century was to drive a certain tribe of Turks, the Ottoman Turks, out of Turkestan into Asia Minor. They extended and consolidated their power in Asia Minor, crossed the Dardanelles and conquered Macedonia, Serbia and Bulgaria, until at last Constantinople remained like an island amongst the Ottoman dominions. In 1453 the Ottoman Sultan, Muhammad II, took Constantinople, attacking it from the European side with a great number of guns. This event caused intense excitement in

Europe and there was talk of a crusade, but the day of the crusades was past.

In the course of the sixteenth century the Ottoman Sultans conquered Bagdad, Hungary, Egypt and most of North Africa, and their fleet made them masters of the Mediterranean. They very nearly took Vienna, and they exacted a tribute from the Emperor. There were but two items to offset the general ebb of Christian dominion in the fifteenth century. One was the restoration of the independence of Moscow (1480); the other was the gradual reconquest of Spain by the Christians. In 1492, Granada, the last Moslem state in the peninsula, fell to King Ferdinand of Aragon and his Queen Isabella of Castile.

But it was not until as late as 1571 that the naval battle of Lepanto broke the pride of the Ottomans, and restored the Mediterranean waters to Christian ascendancy.

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The Intellectual Revival of the Europeans

Throughout the twelfth century there were many signs that the European intelligence was recovering courage and leisure, and preparing to take up again the intellectual enterprises of the first Greek scientific enquiries and such speculations as those of the Italian Lucretius. The causes of this revival were many and complex. The suppression of private war, the higher standards of comfort and security that followed the crusades, and the stimulation of men's minds by the experiences of these expeditions were no doubt necessary preliminary conditions. Trade was reviving; cities were recovering ease and safety; the standard of education was arising in the church and spreading among laymen. The thirteenth and fourteenth centuries were a period of growing, independent or quasi-independent cities; Venice, Florence, Genoa, Lisbon, Paris, Bruges, London, Antwerp, Hamburg, Nuremberg, Novgorod, Wisby and Bergen for example. They were all trading cities with many travellers, and where men trade and travel they talk and think. The polemics of the popes and princes, the conspicuous savagery and wickedness of the persecution of heretics, were exciting men to doubt the authority of the church and question and discuss fundamental things.

We have seen how the Arabs were the means of restoring Aristotle to Europe, and how such a prince as Frederick II acted as a channel through which Arabic philosophy and science played upon the renascent European mind. Still more influential in the stirring up of men's ideas were the Jews. Their very existence was a note of interrogation to the claims of the church. And finally the secret, fascinating enquiries of the alchemists were spreading far and wide and setting men to the petty, furtive, and yet fruitful resumption of experimental science.

And the stir in men's minds was by no means confined now to the independent and well educated. The mind of the common man was awake in the world as it had never been before in all the experience of mankind. In spite of priest and persecution, Christianity does seem to have carried a mental ferment wherever its teaching reached. It established a direct relation between the conscience of the individual man and the God of Righteousness, so that now if need arose he had the courage to form his own judgment upon prince or prelate or creed.

As early as the eleventh century philosophical discussion had begun again in Europe, and there were great and growing universities at Paris, Oxford, Bologna and other centres. There mediæval "schoolmen" took up again and thrashed out a series of questions upon the value and meaning of words that were a necessary preliminary to clear thinking in the scientific age that was to follow. And standing by himself because of his distinctive genius was Roger Bacon (circa 1210 to circa 1293), a Franciscan of Oxford, the father of modern experimental science. His name deserves a prominence in our history second only to that of Aristotle.

His writings are one long tirade against ignorance. He told his age it was ignorant, an incredibly bold thing to do. Nowadays a man may tell the world it is as silly as it is solemn, that all its methods are still infantile and clumsy and its dogmas childish assumptions, without much physical danger; but these peoples of the middle ages when they were not actually being massacred or starving or dying of pestilence, were passionately convinced of the wisdom, the completeness and finality of their beliefs, and disposed to resent any reflections upon them very bitterly. Roger Bacon's writings were like a flash of light in a profound darkness. He combined his attack upon the ignorance of his times with a wealth of suggestion for the increase of knowledge. In his passionate insistence upon the need of experiment and of collecting knowledge, the spirit of Aristotle lives again in him. "Experiment, experiment," that is the burthen of Roger Bacon.

Yet of Aristotle himself Roger Bacon fell foul. He fell foul of him because men, instead of facing facts boldly, sat in rooms and pored over the bad Latin translations which were then all that was available of the master. "If I had my way" he wrote, in his intemperate fashion, "I should burn all the books of Aristotle, for the study of them can only lead to a loss of time, produce error, and increase ignorance," a sentiment that Aristotle would probably have echoed could he have returned to a world in which his works were not so much read as worshipped—and that, as Roger Bacon showed, in these most abominable translations.



An early printing press
(From an old print)

Throughout his books, a little disguised by the necessity of seeming to square it all with orthodoxy for fear of the prison and worse, Roger Bacon shouted to mankind, "Cease to be ruled by dogmas and authorities; *look at the world!*" Four chief sources of ignorance he denounced; respect for authority, custom, the sense of the ignorant crowd, and the vain proud unteachableness of our dispositions. Overcome but these, and a world of power would open to men:—

"Machines for navigating are possible without rowers, so that great ships suited to river or ocean, guided by one man, may be borne with greater speed than if they were full of men. Likewise cars may be made so that without a draught animal they may be moved *cum impetu inœstimabile*, as we deem the scythed chariots to have been from which antiquity fought. And flying machines are possible, so that a man may sit in the middle turning some device by which artificial wings may beat the air in the

manner of a flying bird."

So Roger Bacon wrote, but three more centuries were to elapse before men began any systematic attempts to explore the hidden stores of power and interest he realized so clearly existed beneath the dull surface of human affairs.

But the Saracenic world not only gave Christendom the stimulus of its philosophers and alchemists; it also gave it paper. It is scarcely too much to say that paper made the intellectual revival of Europe possible. Paper originated in China, where its use probably goes back to the second century B.C. In 751 the Chinese made an attack upon the Arab Moslems in Samarkand; they were repulsed, and among the prisoners taken from them were some skilled papermakers, from whom the art was learnt. Arabic paper manuscripts from the ninth century onward still exist. The manufacture entered Christendom either through Greece or by the capture of Moorish paper-mills during the Christian reconquest of Spain. But under the Christian Spanish the product deteriorated sadly. Good paper was not made in Christian Europe until the end of the thirteenth century, and then it was Italy which led the world. Only by the fourteenth century did the manufacture reach Germany, and not until the end of that century was it abundant and cheap enough for the printing of books to be a practicable business proposition. Thereupon printing followed naturally and necessarily, for printing is the most obvious of inventions, and the intellectual life of the world entered upon a new and far more vigorous phase. It ceased to be a little trickle from mind to mind; it became a broad flood, in which thousands and presently scores and hundreds of thousands of minds participated.

One immediate result of this achievement of printing was the appearance of an abundance of Bibles in the world. Another was a cheapening of school-books. The knowledge of reading spread swiftly. There was not only a great increase of books in the world, but the books that were now made were plainer to read and so easier to understand. Instead of toiling at a crabbed text and then thinking over its significance, readers now could think unimpeded as they read. With this increase in the facility of reading, the reading public grew. The book ceased to be a highly decorated toy or a scholar's mystery. People began to write books to be read as well as looked at by ordinary people. They wrote in the ordinary language and not in Latin. With the fourteenth century the real history of the European literature begins.

So far we have been dealing only with the Saracenic share in the European revival. Let us turn now to the influence of the Mongol conquests. They stimulated the geographical imagination of Europe enormously. For a time under the Great Khan,

all Asia and Western Europe enjoyed an open intercourse; all the roads were temporarily open, and representatives of every nation appeared at the court of Karakorum. The barriers between Europe and Asia set up by the religious feud of Christianity and Islam were lowered. Great hopes were entertained by the papacy for the conversion of the Mongols to Christianity. Their only religion so far had been Shumanism, a primitive paganism. Envoys of the Pope, Buddhist priests from India, Parisian and Italian and Chinese artificers, Byzantine and Armenian merchants, mingled with Arab officials and Persian and Indian astronomers and mathematicians at the Mongol court. We hear too much in history of the campaigns and massacres of the Mongols, and not enough of their curiosity and desire for learning. Not perhaps as an originative people, but as transmitters of knowledge and method their influence upon the world's history has been very great. And everything one can learn of the vague and romantic personalities of Jengis or Kublai tends to confirm the impression that these men were at least as understanding and creative monarchs as either that flamboyant but egotistical figure Alexander the Great or that raiser of political ghosts, that energetic but illiterate theologian Charlemagne.



Ancient bronze figure from Benin, W. Africa.
Note evidence, in attire, of knowledge of early European explorers.
(In the British Museum)

One of the most interesting of these visitors to the Mongol Court was a certain Venetian, Marco Polo, who afterwards set down his story in a book. He went to China about 1272 with his father and uncle, who had already once made the journey. The Great Khan had been deeply impressed by the elder Polos; they were the first men of the "Latin" peoples he had seen; and he sent them back with enquiries for teachers and learned men who could explain Christianity to him, and for various other European things that had aroused his curiosity. Their visit with Marco was their second visit.



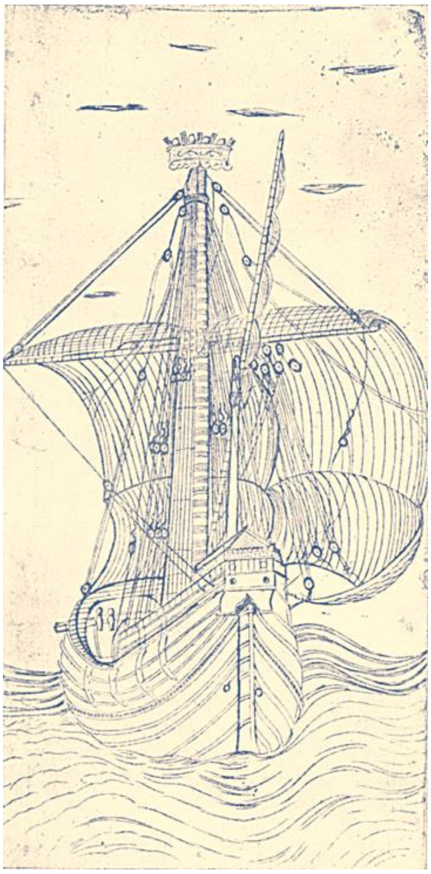
Another ancient negro bronze of a European

The three Polos started by way of Palestine and not by the Crimea, as in their previous expedition. They had with them a gold tablet and other indications from the Great Khan that must have greatly facilitated their journey. The Great Khan had asked for some oil from the lamp that burns in the Holy Sepulchre at Jerusalem; and so

thither they first went, and then by way of Cilicia into Armenia. They went thus far north because the Sultan of Egypt was raiding the Mongol domains at this time. Thence they came by way of Mesopotamia to Ormuz on the Persian Gulf, as if they contemplated a sea voyage. At Ormuz they met merchants from India. For some reason they did not take ship, but instead turned northward through the Persian deserts, and so by way of Balkh over the Pamir to Kashgar, and by way of Kotan and the Lob Nor into the Hwang-ho valley and on to Pekin. At Pekin was the Great Khan, and they were hospitably entertained.

Marco particularly pleased Kublai; he was young and clever, and it is clear he had mastered the Tartar language very thoroughly. He was given an official position and sent on several missions, chiefly in south-west China. The tale he had to tell of vast stretches of smiling and prosperous country, "all the way excellent hostelries for travellers," and "fine vineyards, fields and gardens," of "many abbeys" of Buddhist monks, of manufactures of "cloth of silk and gold and many fine taffetas," a "constant succession of cities and boroughs," and so on, first roused the incredulity and then fired the imagination of all Europe. He told of Burmah, and of its great armies with hundreds of elephants, and how these animals were defeated by the Mongol bowmen, and also of the Mongol conquest of Pegu. He told of Japan, and greatly exaggerated the amount of gold in that country. For three years Marco ruled the city of Yang-chow as governor, and he probably impressed the Chinese inhabitants as being very little more of a foreigner than any Tartar would have been. He may also have been sent on a mission to India. Chinese records mention a certain Polo attached to the imperial council in 1277, a very valuable confirmation of the general truth of the Polo story.

The publication of Marco Polo's travels produced a profound effect upon the European imagination. The European literature, and especially the European romance of the fifteenth century, echoes with the names in Marco Polo's story, with Cathay (North China) and Cambulac (Pekin) and the like.



Early Italian engraving of a sailing ship
(In the British Museum)

Two centuries later, among the readers of the Travels of Marco Polo was a certain Genoese mariner, Christopher Columbus, who conceived the brilliant idea of sailing westward round the world to China. In Seville there is a copy of the Travels with marginal notes by Columbus. There were many reasons why the thought of a Genoese should be turned in this direction. Until its capture by the Turks in 1453 Constantinople had been an impartial trading mart between the Western world and the East, and the Genoese had traded there freely. But the "Latin" Venetians, the bitter rivals of the Genoese, had been the allies and helpers of the Turks against the Greeks, and with the coming of the Turks Constantinople turned an unfriendly face upon Genoese trade. The long forgotten discovery that the world was round had gradually resumed its sway over men's minds. The idea of going westward to China was therefore a fairly obvious one. It was encouraged by two things. The mariner's compass had now been invented and men were no longer left to the mercy of a fine night and the stars to determine the direction in which they were sailing, and the

Normans, Catalonians and Genoese and Portuguese had already pushed out into the Atlantic as far as the Canary Isles, Madeira, and the Azores.

Yet Columbus found many difficulties before he could get ships to put his idea to the test. He went from one European Court to another. Finally at Granada, just won from the Moors, he secured the patronage of Ferdinand and Isabella, and was able to set out across the unknown ocean in three small ships. After a voyage of two months and nine days he came to a land which he believed to be India, but which was really a new continent, whose distinct existence the old world had never hitherto suspected. He returned to Spain with gold, cotton, strange beasts and birds, and two wild- eyed painted Indians to be baptized. They were called Indians because, to the end of his days, he believed that this land he had found was India. Only in the course of several years did men begin to realize that the whole new continent of America was added to the world's resources.

The success of Columbus stimulated overseas enterprise enormously. In 1497 the Portuguese sailed round Africa to India, and in 1515 there were Portuguese ships in Java. In 1519 Magellan, a Portuguese sailor in Spanish employment, sailed out of Seville westward with five ships, of which one, the *Vittoria*, came back up the river to Seville in 1522, the first ship that had ever circumnavigated the world. Thirty-one men were aboard her, survivors of two hundred and eighty who had started. Magellan himself had been killed in the Philippine Isles.

Printed paper books, a new realization of the round world as a thing altogether attainable, a new vision of strange lands, strange animals and plants, strange manners and customs, discoveries overseas and in the skies and in the ways and materials of life burst upon the European mind. The Greek classics, buried and forgotten for so long, were speedily being printed and studied, and were colouring men's thoughts with the dreams of Plato and the traditions of an age of republican freedom and dignity. The Roman dominion had first brought law and order to Western Europe, and the Latin church had restored it; but under both Pagan and Catholic Rome curiosity and innovation were subordinate to and restrained by organization. The reign of the Latin mind was now drawing to an end. Between the thirteenth and the sixteenth century the European Aryans, thanks to the stimulating influence of Semite and Mongol and the rediscovery of the Greek classics, broke away from the Latin tradition and rose again to the intellectual and material leadership of mankind.

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The Reformation of the Latin Church

The Latin Church itself was enormously affected by this mental rebirth. It was dismembered; and even the portion that survived was extensively renewed.

We have told how nearly the church came to the autocratic leadership of all Christendom in the eleventh and twelfth centuries, and how in the fourteenth and fifteenth its power over men's minds and affairs declined. We have described how popular religious enthusiasm which had in earlier ages been its support and power was turned against it by its pride, persecutions and centralization, and how the insidious scepticism of Frederick II bore fruit in a growing insubordination of the princes. The Great Schism had reduced its religious and political prestige to negligible proportions. The forces of insurrection struck it now from both sides.

The teachings of the Englishman Wycliffe spread widely throughout Europe. In 1398 a learned Czech, John Huss, delivered a series of lectures upon Wycliffe's teachings in the university of Prague. This teaching spread rapidly beyond the educated class and aroused great popular enthusiasm. In 1414-18 a Council of the whole church was held at Constance to settle the Great Schism. Huss was invited to this Council under promise of a safe conduct from the emperor, seized, put on trial for heresy and burnt alive (1415). So far from tranquilizing the Bohemian people, this led to an insurrection of the Hussites in that country, the first of a series of religious wars that inaugurated the break-up of Latin Christendom. Against this insurrection Pope Martin V, the Pope specially elected at Constance as the head of a reunited Christendom, preached a Crusade.

Five Crusades in all were launched upon this sturdy little people and all of them failed. All the unemployed ruffianism of Europe was turned upon Bohemia in the fifteenth century, just as in the thirteenth it had been turned upon the Waldenses. But the Bohemian Czechs, unlike the Waldenses, believed in armed resistance. The Bohemian Crusade dissolved and streamed away from the battlefield at the sound of the Hussites' wagons and the distant chanting of their troops; it did not even wait to fight (Battle of Domazlice 1431). In 1436 an agreement was patched up with the Hussites by a new Council of the church at Basle in which many of the special objections to Latin practice were conceded.



Portrait of Luther
(From an early German engraving in the British Museum)

In the fifteenth century a great pestilence had produced much social disorganization throughout Europe. There had been extreme misery and discontent among the common people, and peasant risings against the landlords and the wealthy in England and France. After the Hussite Wars these peasant insurrections increased in gravity in Germany and took on a religious character. Printing came in as an influence upon this development. By the middle of the fifteenth century there were printers at work with movable type in Holland and the Rhineland. The art spread to Italy and England, where Caxton was printing in Westminster in 1477. The immediate consequence was a great increase and distribution of Bibles, and greatly increased facilities for widespread popular controversies. The European world became a world of readers, to an extent that had never happened to any community in the past. And this sudden irrigation of the general mind with clearer ideas and more accessible information occurred just at a time when the church was confused and divided and not in a position to defend itself effectively, and when many princes were looking for means to weaken its hold upon the vast wealth it claimed in their dominions.

In Germany the attack upon the church gathered round the personality of an ex-monk, Martin Luther (1483-1546) who appeared in Wittenberg in 1517 offering

disputations against various orthodox doctrines and practices. At first he disputed in Latin in the fashion of the Schoolmen. Then he took up the new weapon of the printed word and scattered his views far and wide in German addressed to the ordinary people. An attempt was made to suppress him as Huss had been suppressed, but the printing press had changed conditions and he had too many open and secret friends among the German princes for this fate to overtake him.

For now in this age of multiplying ideas and weakened faith there were many rulers who saw their advantage in breaking the religious ties between their people and Rome. They sought to make themselves in person the heads of a more nationalized religion. England, Scotland, Sweden, Norway, Denmark, North Germany and Bohemia, one after another, separated themselves from the Roman Communion. They have remained separated ever since.



A Majolica dish pained in colours.
An allegory of the Church triumphant over heretics and infidels. Italian (Urbino), dated 1543.
(In the Victoria and Albert Museum)

The various princes concerned cared very little for the moral and intellectual freedom of their subjects. They used the religious doubts and insurgence of their peoples to strengthen them against Rome, but they tried to keep a grip upon the popular movement as soon as that rupture was achieved and a national church set up under the control of the crown. But there has always been a curious vitality in the teaching of Jesus, a direct appeal to righteousness and a man's self-respect over every loyalty and every subordination, lay or ecclesiastical. None of these princely churches broke off without also breaking off a number of fragmentary sects that would admit the intervention of neither prince nor pope between a man and his God. In England and Scotland, for example, there was a number of sects who now held firmly to the Bible as their one guide in life and belief. They refused the disciplines of a state church. In England these dissentients were the Non- conformists, who played a very large part in the politics of that country in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries. In England they carried their objection to a princely head to the Church so far as to decapitate King Charles I (1649), and for eleven prosperous years England was a republic under Nonconformist rule.

The breaking away of this large section of Northern Europe from Latin Christendom is what is generally spoken of as the Reformation. But the shock and stress of these losses produced changes perhaps as profound in the Roman church itself. The church was reorganized and a new spirit came into its life. One of the dominant figures in this revival was a young Spanish soldier, Inigo Lopez de Recalde, better known to the world as St. Ignatius of Loyola. After some romantic beginnings he became a priest (1538) and was permitted to found the Society of Jesus, a direct attempt to bring the generous and chivalrous traditions of military discipline into the service of religion. This Society of Jesus, the Jesuits, became one of the greatest teaching and missionary societies the world has ever seen. It carried Christianity to India, China and America. It arrested the rapid disintegration of the Roman church. It raised the standard of education throughout the whole Catholic world; it raised the level of Catholic intelligence and quickened the Catholic conscience everywhere; it stimulated Protestant Europe to competitive educational efforts. The vigorous and aggressive Roman Catholic church we know to-day is largely the product of this Jesuit revival.

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The Emperor Charles V

The Holy Roman Empire came to a sort of climax in the reign of the Emperor Charles V. He was one of the most extraordinary monarchs that Europe has ever seen. For a time he had the air of being the greatest monarch since Charlemagne.

His greatness was not of his own making. It was largely the creation of his grandfather, the Emperor Maximilian I (1459- 1519). Some families have fought, others have intrigued their way to world power; the Habsburgs married their way. Maximilian began his career with Austria, Styria, part of Alsace and other districts, the original Habsburg patrimony; he married—the lady's name scarcely matters to us—the Netherlands and Burgundy. Most of Burgundy slipped from him after his first wife's death, but the Netherlands he held. Then he tried unsuccessfully to marry Brittany. He became emperor in succession to his father, Frederick III, in 1493, and married the duchy of Milan. Finally he married his son to the weak-minded daughter of Ferdinand and Isabella, the Ferdinand and Isabella of Columbus, who not only reigned over a freshly united Spain and over Sardinia and the kingdom of the two Sicilies, but over all America west of Brazil. So it was that this Charles V, his grandson, inherited most of the American continent and between a third and a half of what the Turks had left of Europe. He succeeded to the Netherlands in 1506. When his grandfather Ferdinand died in 1516, he became practically king of the Spanish dominions, his mother being imbecile; and his grandfather Maximilian dying in 1519, he was in 1520 elected Emperor at the still comparatively tender age of twenty.

He was a fair young man with a not very intelligent face, a thick upper lip and a long clumsy chin. He found himself in a world of young and vigorous personalities. It was an age of brilliant young monarchs. Francis I had succeeded to the French throne in 1515 at the age of twenty-one, Henry VIII had become King of England in 1509 at eighteen. It was the age of Baber in India (1526-1530) and Suleiman the Magnificent in Turkey (1520), both exceptionally capable monarchs, and the Pope Leo X (1513) was also a very distinguished pope. The Pope and Francis I attempted to prevent the election of Charles as Emperor because they dreaded the concentration of so much power in the hands of one man. Both Francis I and Henry VIII offered

themselves to the imperial electors. But there was now a long established tradition of Habsburg Emperors (since 1273), and some energetic bribery secured the election for Charles.

At first the young man was very much a magnificent puppet in the hands of his ministers. Then slowly he began to assert himself and take control. He began to realize something of the threatening complexities of his exalted position. It was a position as unsound as it was splendid.



The Charles V portrait by Titian
(In the Gallery del Prado, Madrid)

From the very outset of his reign he was faced by the situation created by Luther's agitations in Germany. The Emperor had one reason for siding with the reformers in the opposition of the Pope to his election. But he had been brought up in Spain, that most Catholic of countries, and he decided against Luther. So he came into conflict with the protestant princes and particularly the Elector of Saxony. He found himself in the presence of an opening rift that was to split the outworn fabric of Christendom into two contending camps. His attempts to close that rift were strenuous and honest and ineffective. There was an extensive peasant revolt in Germany which interwove with the general political and religious disturbance. And these internal troubles were complicated by attacks upon the Empire from east and west alike. On the west of Charles was his spirited rival, Francis I; to the east was the ever advancing Turk, who was now in Hungary, in alliance with Francis and clamouring for certain arrears of tribute from the Austrian dominions. Charles had the money and army of Spain at his disposal, but it was extremely difficult to get any effective support in money from Germany. His social and political troubles were complicated by financial distresses. He was forced to ruinous borrowing.

On the whole, Charles, in alliance with Henry VIII, was successful against Francis I and the Turk. Their chief battlefield was North Italy; the generalship was dull on both sides; their advances and retreats depended mainly on the arrival of reinforcements. The German army invaded France, failed to take Marseilles, fell back into Italy, lost Milan, and was besieged in Pavia. Francis I made a long and unsuccessful siege of Pavia, was caught by fresh German forces, defeated, wounded, and taken prisoner. But thereupon the Pope and Henry VIII, still haunted by the fear of his attaining excessive power, turned against Charles. The German troops in Milan, under the Constable of Bourbon, being unpaid, forced rather than followed their commander into a raid upon Rome. They stormed the city and pillaged it (1527). The Pope took refuge in the Castle of St. Angelo while the looting and slaughter went on. He bought off the German troops at last by the payment of four hundred thousand ducats. Ten years of such confused fighting impoverished all Europe. At last the Emperor found himself triumphant in Italy. In 1530, he was crowned by the Pope—he was the last German Emperor to be so crowned—at Bologna.

Meanwhile the Turks were making great headway in Hungary. They had defeated and killed the king of Hungary in 1526, they held Buda-Pesth, and in 1529 Suleiman the Magnificent very nearly took Vienna. The Emperor was greatly concerned by these advances, and did his utmost to drive back the Turks, but he found

the greatest difficulty in getting the German princes to unite even with this formidable enemy upon their very borders. Francis I remained implacable for a time, and there was a new French war; but in 1538 Charles won his rival over to a more friendly attitude after ravaging the south of France. Francis and Charles then formed an alliance against the Turk. But the Protestant princes, the German princes who were resolved to break away from Rome, had formed a league, the Schmalkaldic League, against the Emperor, and in the place of a great campaign to recover Hungary for Christendom Charles had to turn his mind to the gathering internal struggle in Germany. Of that struggle he saw only the opening war. It was a struggle, a sanguinary irrational bickering of princes, for ascendancy, now flaming into war and destruction, now sinking back to intrigues and diplomacies; it was a snake's sack of princely policies that was to go on writhing incurably right into the nineteenth century and to waste and desolate Central Europe again and again.

The Emperor never seems to have grasped the true forces at work in these gathering troubles. He was for his time and station an exceptionally worthy man, and he seems to have taken the religious dissensions that were tearing Europe into warring fragments as genuine theological differences. He gathered diets and councils in futile attempts at reconciliation. Formulæ and confessions were tried over. The student of German history must struggle with the details of the Religious Peace of Nuremberg, the settlement at the Diet of Ratisbon, the Interim of Augsburg, and the like. Here we do but mention them as details in the worried life of this culminating emperor. As a matter of fact, hardly one of the multifarious princes and rulers in Europe seems to have been acting in good faith. The widespread religious trouble of the world, the desire of the common people for truth and social righteousness, the spreading knowledge of the time, all those things were merely counters in the imaginations of princely diplomacy. Henry VIII of England, who had begun his career with a book against heresy, and who had been rewarded by the Pope with the title of "Defender of the Faith," being anxious to divorce his first wife in favour of a young lady named Anne Boleyn, and wishing also to loot the vast wealth of the church in England, joined the company of Protestant princes in 1530. Sweden, Denmark and Norway had already gone over to the Protestant side.

The German religious war began in 1546, a few months after the death of Martin Luther. We need not trouble about the incidents of the campaign. The Protestant Saxon army was badly beaten at Lochau. By something very like a breach of faith Philip of Hesse, the Emperor's chief remaining antagonist, was caught and

imprisoned, and the Turks were bought off by the promise of an annual tribute. In 1547, to the great relief of the Emperor, Francis I died. So by 1547 Charles got to a kind of settlement, and made his last efforts to effect peace where there was no peace. In 1552 all Germany was at war again, only a precipitate flight from Innsbruck saved Charles from capture, and in 1552, with the treaty of Passau, came another unstable equilibrium...

Such is the brief outline of the politics of the Empire for thirty-two years. It is interesting to note how entirely the European mind was concentrated upon the struggle for European ascendancy. Neither Turks, French, English nor Germans had yet discovered any political interest in the great continent of America, nor any significance in the new sea routes to Asia. Great things were happening in America; Cortez with a mere handful of men had conquered the great Neolithic empire of Mexico for Spain, Pizarro had crossed the Isthmus of Panama (1530) and subjugated another wonder-land, Peru. But as yet these events meant no more to Europe than a useful and stimulating influx of silver to the Spanish treasury.

It was after the treaty of Passau that Charles began to display his distinctive originality of mind. He was now entirely bored and disillusioned by his imperial greatness. A sense of the intolerable futility of these European rivalries came upon him. He had never been of a very sound constitution, he was naturally indolent and he was suffering greatly from gout. He abdicated. He made over all his sovereign rights in Germany to his brother Ferdinand, and Spain and the Netherlands he resigned to his son Philip. Then in a sort of magnificent dudgeon he retired to a monastery at Yuste, among the oak and chestnut forests in the hills to the north of the Tagus valley. There he died in 1558.

Much has been written in a sentimental vein of this retirement, this renunciation of the world by this tired majestic Titan, world-weary, seeking in an austere solitude his peace with God. But his retreat was neither solitary nor austere; he had with him nearly a hundred and fifty attendants: his establishment had all the splendour and indulgences without the fatigues or a court, and Philip II was a dutiful son to whom his father's advice was a command.

And if Charles had lost his living interest in the administration of European affairs, there were other motives of a more immediate sort to stir him. Says Prescott: "In the almost daily correspondence between Quixada, or Gaztelu, and the Secretary of State at Valladolid, there is scarcely a letter that does not turn more or less on the Emperor's eating or his illness. The one seems naturally to follow like a running

commentary, on the other. It is rare that such topics have formed the burden of communications with the department of state. It must have been no easy matter for the secretary to preserve his gravity in the perusal of despatches in which politics and gastronomy were so strangely mixed together. The courier from Valladolid to Lisbon was ordered to make a detour, so as to take Jarandilla in his route, and bring supplies to the royal table. On Thursdays he was to bring fish to serve for the *jour maigre* that was to follow. The trout in the neighbourhood Charles thought too small, so others of a larger size were to be sent from Valladolid. Fish of every kind was to his taste, as, indeed, was anything that in its nature or habits at all approached to fish. Eels, frogs, oysters, occupied an important place in the royal bill of fare. Potted fish, especially anchovies, found great favour with him; and he regretted that he had not brought a better supply of these from the Low Countries. On an eel-pasty he particularly doted."... [1]



Interior of St. Peter's, Rome, showing the High Altar

[1] Prescott's Appendix to Robertson's *History of Charles V.*

In 1554 Charles had obtained a bull from Pope Julius III granting him a dispensation from fasting, and allowing him to break his fast early in the morning even when he was to take the sacrament.

Eating and doctoring! it was a return to elemental things. He had never acquired the habit of reading, but he would be read aloud to at meals after the fashion of Charlemagne, and would make what one narrator describes as a "sweet and heavenly commentary." He also amused himself with mechanical toys, by listening to music or sermons, and by attending to the imperial business that still came drifting in to him. The death of the Empress, to whom he was greatly attached, had turned his mind towards religion, which in his case took a punctilious and ceremonial form; every Friday in Lent he scourged himself with the rest of the monks with such good will as to draw blood. These exercises and the gout released a bigotry in Charles that had hitherto been restrained by considerations of policy. The appearance of Protestant teaching close at hand in Valladolid roused him to fury. "Tell the grand inquisitor and his council from me to be at their posts, and to lay the axe at the root of the evil before it spreads further."... He expressed a doubt whether it would not be well, in so black an affair, to dispense with the ordinary course of justice, and to show no mercy; "lest the criminal, if pardoned, should have the opportunity of repeating his crime." He recommended, as an example, his own mode or proceeding in the Netherlands, "where all who remained obstinate in their errors were burned alive, and those who were admitted to penitence were beheaded."

And almost symbolical of his place and rôle in history was his preoccupation with funerals. He seems to have had an intuition that something great was dead in Europe and sorely needed burial, that there was a need to write Finis, overdue. He not only attended every actual funeral that was celebrated at Yuste, but he had services conducted for the absent dead, he held a funeral service in memory of his wife on the anniversary of her death, and finally he celebrated his own obsequies.

"The chapel was hung with black, and the blaze of hundreds of wax-lights was scarcely sufficient to dispel the darkness. The brethren in their conventual dress, and all the Emperor's household clad in deep mourning, gathered round a huge catafalque, shrouded also in black, which had been raised in the centre of the chapel. The service for the burial of the dead was then performed; and, amidst the dismal wail of the monks, the prayers ascended for the departed spirit, that it might be received into the mansions of the blessed. The sorrowful attendants were melted to tears, as the

image of their master's death was presented to their minds—or they were touched, it may be, with compassion by this pitiable display of weakness. Charles, muffled in a dark mantle, and bearing a lighted candle in his hand, mingled with his household, the spectator of his own obsequies; and the doleful ceremony was concluded by his placing the taper in the hands of the priest, in sign of his surrendering up his soul to the Almighty."

Within two months of this masquerade he was dead. And the brief greatness of the Holy Roman Empire died with him. His realm was already divided between his brother and his son. The Holy Roman Empire struggled on indeed to the days of Napoleon I but as an invalid and dying thing. To this day its unburied tradition still poisons the political air.

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The Age of Political Experiments; of Grand Monarchy and Parliaments and Republicanism in Europe

The Latin Church was broken, the Holy Roman Empire was in extreme decay; the history of Europe from the opening of the sixteenth century onward is a story of peoples feeling their way darkly to some new method of government, better adapted to the new conditions that were arising. In the Ancient World, over long periods of time, there had been changes of dynasty and even changes of ruling race and language, but the form of government through monarch and temple remained fairly stable, and still more stable was the ordinary way of living. In this modern Europe since the sixteenth century the dynastic changes are unimportant, and the interest of history lies in the wide and increasing variety of experiments in political and social organization.

The political history of the world from the sixteenth century onward was, we have said, an effort, a largely unconscious effort, of mankind to adapt its political and social methods to certain new conditions that had now arisen. The effort to adapt was complicated by the fact that the conditions themselves were changing with a steadily increasing rapidity. The adaptation, mainly unconscious and almost always unwilling (for man in general hates voluntary change), has lagged more and more behind the alterations in conditions. From the sixteenth century onward the history of mankind is a story of political and social institutions becoming more and more plainly misfits, less comfortable and more vexatious, and of the slow reluctant realization of the need for a conscious and deliberate reconstruction of the whole scheme of human societies in the face of needs and possibilities new to all the former experiences of life.

What are these changes in the conditions of human life that have disorganized that balance of empire, priest, peasant and trader, with periodic refreshment by barbaric conquest, that has held human affairs in the Old World in a sort of working rhythm for more than a hundred centuries?

They are manifold and various, for human affairs are multitudinously complex; but the main changes seem all to turn upon one cause, namely, the growth and extension of a knowledge of the nature of things, beginning first of all in small groups

of intelligent people and spreading at first slowly, and in the last five hundred years very rapidly, to larger and larger proportions of the general population.

But there has also been a great change in human conditions due to a change in the spirit of human life. This change has gone on side by side with the increase and extension of knowledge, and is subtly connected with it. There has been an increasing disposition to treat a life based on the common and more elementary desires and gratifications as unsatisfactory, and to seek relationship with and service and participation in a larger life. This is the common characteristic of all the great religions that have spread throughout the world in the last twenty odd centuries, Buddhism, Christianity and Islam alike. They have had to do with the spirit of man in a way that the older religions did not have to do. They are forces quite different in their nature and effect from the old fetishistic blood-sacrifice religions of priest and temple that they have in part modified and in part replaced. They have gradually evolved a self-respect in the individual and a sense of participation and responsibility in the common concerns of mankind that did not exist among the populations of the earlier civilizations.

The first considerable change in the conditions of political and social life was the simplification and extended use of writing in the ancient civilizations which made larger empires and wider political understandings practicable and inevitable. The next movement forward came with the introduction of the horse, and later on of the camel as a means of transport, the use of wheeled vehicles, the extension of roads and the increased military efficiency due to the discovery of terrestrial iron. Then followed the profound economic disturbances due to the device of coined money and the change in the nature of debt, proprietorship and trade due to this convenient but dangerous convention. The empires grew in size and range, and men's ideas grew likewise to correspond with these things. Came the disappearance of local gods, the age of theocrasia, and the teaching of the great world religions. Came also the beginnings of reasoned and recorded history and geography, the first realization by man of his profound ignorance, and the first systematic search for knowledge.

For a time the scientific process which began so brilliantly in Greece and Alexandria was interrupted. The raids of the Teutonic barbarians, the westward drive of the Mongolian peoples, convulsive religious reconstruction and great pestilences put enormous strains upon political and social order. When civilization emerged again from this phase of conflict and confusion, slavery was no longer the basis of economic life; and the first paper mills were preparing a new medium for collective

information and co-operation in printed matter. Gradually at this point and that, the search for knowledge, the systematic scientific process, was resumed.

And now from the sixteenth century onward, as an inevitable by-product of systematic thought, appeared a steadily increasing series of inventions and devices affecting the intercommunication and interaction of men with one another. They all tended towards wider range of action, greater mutual benefits or injuries, and increased co-operation, and they came faster and faster. Men's minds had not been prepared for anything of the sort, and until the great catastrophes at the beginning of the twentieth century quickened men's minds, the historian has very little to tell of any intelligently planned attempts to meet the new conditions this increasing flow of inventions was creating. The history of mankind for the last four centuries is rather like that of an imprisoned sleeper, stirring clumsily and uneasily while the prison that restrains and shelters him catches fire, not waking but incorporating the crackling and warmth of the fire with ancient and incongruous dreams, than like that of a man consciously awake to danger and opportunity.

Since history is the story not of individual lives but of communities, it is inevitable that the inventions that figure most in the historical record are inventions affecting communications. In the sixteenth century the chief new things that we have to note are the appearance of printed paper and the seaworthy, ocean-going sailing ship using the new device of the mariner's compass. The former cheapened, spread, and revolutionized teaching, public information and discussion, and the fundamental operations of political activity. The latter made the round world one. But almost equally important was the increased utilization and improvement of guns and gunpowder which the Mongols had first brought westward in the thirteenth century. This destroyed the practical immunity of barons in their castles and of walled cities. Guns swept away feudalism. Constantinople fell to guns. Mexico and Peru fell before the terror of the Spanish guns.



Cromwell dissolves the Long Parliament and so becomes autocrat of the English Republic.
(From a contemporary satirical print in the British Museum)

The seventeenth century saw the development of systematic scientific publication, a less conspicuous but ultimately far more pregnant innovation. Conspicuous among the leaders in this great forward step was Sir Francis Bacon (1561-1626), afterwards Lord Verulam, Lord Chancellor of England. He was the pupil and perhaps the mouthpiece of another Englishman, Dr. Gilbert, the experimental philosopher of Colchester (1540-1603). This second Bacon, like the first, preached observation and experiment, and he used the inspiring and fruitful form of a Utopian story, *The New Atlantis*, to express his dream of a great service of scientific research.

Presently arose the Royal Society of London, the Florentine Society, and later other national bodies for the encouragement of research and the publication and exchange of knowledge. These European scientific societies became fountains not only of countless inventions but also of a destructive criticism of the grotesque theological history of the world that had dominated and crippled human thought for many centuries.

Neither the seventeenth nor the eighteenth century witnessed any innovations so

immediately revolutionary in human conditions as printed paper and the ocean-going ship, but there was a steady accumulation of knowledge and scientific energy that was to bear its full fruits in the nineteenth century. The exploration and mapping of the world went on. Tasmania, Australia, New Zealand appeared on the map. In Great Britain in the eighteenth century coal coke began to be used for metallurgical purposes, leading to a considerable cheapening of iron and to the possibility of casting and using it in larger pieces than had been possible before, when it had been smelted with wood charcoal. Modern machinery dawned.

Like the trees of the celestial city, science bears bud and flower and fruit at the same time and continuously. With the onset of the nineteenth century the real fruition of science—which indeed henceforth may never cease—began. First came steam and steel, the railway, the great liner, vast bridges and buildings, machinery of almost limitless power, the possibility of a bountiful satisfaction of every material human need, and then, still more wonderful, the hidden treasures of electrical science were opened to men....



The Court at Versailles
(From the print after Watteau in the British Museum)

We have compared the political and social life of man from the sixteenth century onward to that of a sleeping prisoner who lies and dreams while his prison burns about him. In the sixteenth century the European mind was still going on with its Latin Imperial dream, its dream of a Holy Roman Empire, united under a Catholic Church. But just as some uncontrollable element in our composition will insist at times upon introducing into our dreams the most absurd and destructive comments, so thrust into this dream we find the sleeping face and craving stomach of the Emperor Charles V, while Henry VIII of England and Luther tear the unity of Catholicism to shreds.

In the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries the dream turned to personal monarchy. The history of nearly all Europe during this period tells with variations the story of an attempt to consolidate a monarchy, to make it absolute and to extend its power over weaker adjacent regions, and of the steady resistance, first of the landowners and then with the increase of foreign trade and home industry, of the growing trading and moneyed class, to the exaction and interference of the crown. There is no universal victory of either side; here it is the King who gets the upper hand, while there it is the man of private property who beats the King. In one case we find a King becoming the sun and centre of his national world, while just over his borders a sturdy mercantile class maintains a republic. So wide a range of variation shows how entirely experimental, what local accidents, were all the various governments of this period.

A very common figure in these national dramas is the King's minister, often in the still Catholic countries a prelate, who stands behind the King, serves him and dominates him by his indispensable services.

Here in the limits set to us it is impossible to tell these various national dramas in detail. The trading folk of Holland went Protestant and republican, and cast off the rule of Philip II of Spain, the son of the Emperor Charles V. In England Henry VIII and his minister Wolsey, Queen Elizabeth and her minister Burleigh, prepared the foundations of an absolutism that was wrecked by the folly of James I and Charles I. Charles I was beheaded for treason to his people (1649), a new turn in the political thought of Europe. For a dozen years (until 1660) Britain was a republic; and the crown was an unstable power, much overshadowed by parliament, until George III (1760-1820) made a strenuous and partly successful effort to restore its predominance. The King of France, on the other hand, was the most successful of all the European Kings in perfecting monarchy. Two great ministers, Richelieu (1585-1642) and Mazarin (1602-1661) built up the power of the crown in that country, and the process was aided

by the long reign and very considerable abilities of King Louis XIV, "the Grand Monarque" (1643-1715).

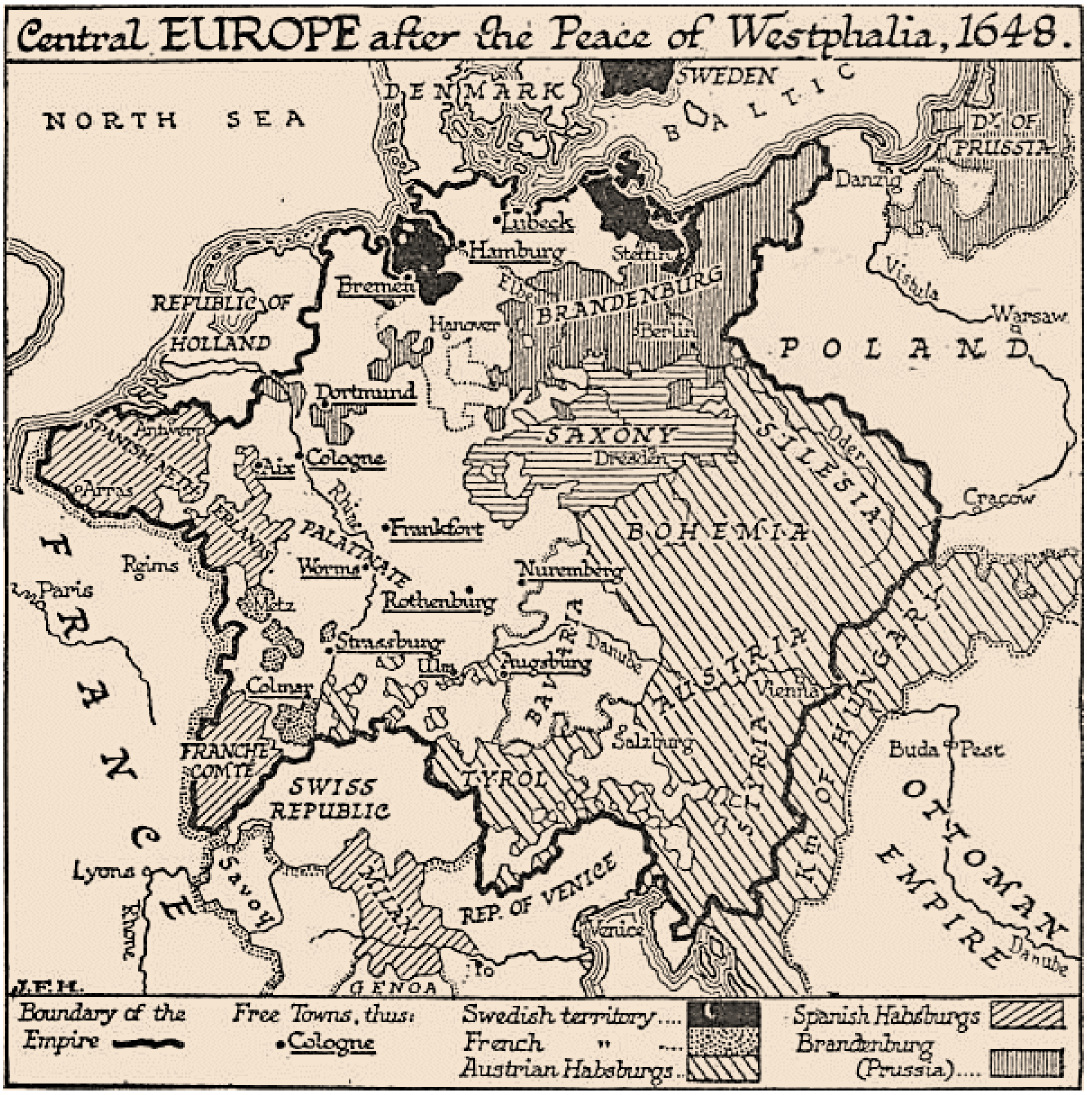
Louis XIV was indeed the pattern King of Europe. He was, within his limitations, an exceptionally capable King; his ambition was stronger than his baser passions, and he guided his country towards bankruptcy through the complication of a spirited foreign policy with an elaborate dignity that still extorts our admiration. His immediate desire was to consolidate and extend France to the Rhine and Pyrenees, and to absorb the Spanish Netherlands; his remoter view saw the French kings as the possible successors of Charlemagne in a recast Holy Roman Empire. He made bribery a state method almost more important than warfare. Charles II of England was in his pay, and so were most of the Polish nobility, presently to be described. His money, or rather the money of the tax- paying classes in France, went everywhere. But his prevailing occupation was splendour. His great palace at Versailles with its salons, its corridors, its mirrors, its terraces and fountains and parks and prospects, was the envy and admiration of the world.



The sack of a village during the French Revolution
(From Callot's "Misères de la Guerre")

He provoked a universal imitation. Every king and princelet in Europe was building his own Versailles as much beyond his means as his subjects and credits would permit. Everywhere the nobility rebuilt or extended their chateaux to the new pattern. A great industry of beautiful and elaborate fabrics and furnishings developed. The luxurious arts flourished everywhere; sculpture in alabaster, faience, gilt woodwork, metal work, stamped leather, much music, magnificent painting,

beautiful printing and bindings, fine crockery, fine vintages. Amidst the mirrors and fine furniture went a strange race of "gentlemen" in tall powdered wigs, silks and laces, poised upon high red heels, supported by amazing canes; and still more wonderful "ladies," under towers of powdered hair and wearing vast expansions of silk and satin sustained on wire. Through it all postured the great Louis, the sun of his world, unaware of the meagre and sulky and bitter faces that watched him from those lower darknesses to which his sunshine did not penetrate.



The German people remained politically divided throughout this period of the monarchies and experimental governments, and a considerable number of ducal and princely courts aped the splendours of Versailles on varying scales. The Thirty Years

War (1618-48), a devastating scramble among the Germans, Swedes and Bohemians for fluctuating political advantages, sapped the energies of Germany for a century. A map must show the crazy patchwork in which this struggle ended, a map of Europe according to the Peace of Westphalia (1648). One sees a tangle of principalities, dukedoms, free states and the like, some partly in and partly out of the Empire. Sweden's arm, the reader will note, reached far into Germany; and except for a few islands of territory within the imperial boundaries France was still far from the Rhine. Amidst this patchwork the Kingdom of Prussia—it became a Kingdom in 1701—rose steadily to prominence and sustained a series of successful wars. Frederick the Great of Prussia (1740-86) had his Versailles at Potsdam, where his court spoke French, read French literature and rivalled the culture of the French King.

In 1714 the Elector of Hanover became King of England, adding one more to the list of monarchies half in and half out of the empire.

The Austrian branch of the descendants of Charles V retained the title of Emperor; the Spanish branch retained Spain. But now there was also an emperor of the East again. After the fall of Constantinople (1453), the grand duke of Moscow, Ivan the Great (1462-1505) claimed to be heir to the Byzantine throne and adopted the Byzantine double-headed eagle upon his arms. His grandson, Ivan IV, Ivan the Terrible (1533-1584) assumed the imperial title of Cæsar (Tzar). But only in the latter half of the seventeenth century did Russia cease to seem remote and Asiatic to the European mind. The Tzar Peter the Great (1682-1725) brought Russia into the arena of Western affairs. He built a new capital for his empire, Petersburg upon the Neva, that played the part of a window between Russia and Europe, and he set up his Versailles at Peterhof eighteen miles away, employing a French architect who gave him a terrace, fountains, cascades, picture gallery, park, and all the recognized appointments of Grand Monarchy. In Russia as in Prussia French became the language of the court.

Unhappily placed between Austria, Prussia, and Russia was the Polish kingdom, an ill-organized state of great landed proprietors too jealous of their own individual grandeur to permit more than a nominal kingship to the monarch they elected. Her fate was division among these three neighbours, in spite of the efforts of France to retain her as an independent ally. Switzerland at this time was a group of republican cantons; Venice was a republic; Italy like so much of Germany was divided among minor dukes and princes. The pope ruled like a prince in the papal states, too fearful now of losing the allegiance of the remaining Catholic princes to interfere between them and their subjects or to remind the world of the commonweal of Christendom.

There remained indeed no common political idea in Europe at all; Europe was given over altogether to division and diversity.

All these sovereign princes and republics carried on schemes of aggrandizement against each other. Each one of them pursued a "foreign policy" of aggression against its neighbours and of aggressive alliances. We Europeans still live to-day in the last phase of this age of the multifarious sovereign states, and still suffer from the hatreds, hostilities and suspicions it engendered. The history of this time becomes more and more manifestly "gossip," more and more unmeaning and wearisome to a modern intelligence. You are told of how this war was caused by this King's mistress, and how the jealousy of one minister for another caused that. A tittle-tattle of bribes and rivalries disgusts the intelligent student. The more permanently significant fact is that in spite of the obstruction of a score of frontiers, reading and thought still spread and increased and inventions multiplied. The eighteenth century saw the appearance of a literature profoundly sceptical and critical of the courts and policies of the time. In such a book as Voltaire's *Candide* we have the expression of an infinite weariness with the planless confusion of the European world.

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The New Empires of the Europeans in Asia and Overseas

While Central Europe thus remained divided and confused, the Western Europeans and particularly the Dutch, the Scandinavians, the Spanish, the Portuguese, the French and the British, were extending the area of their struggles across the seas of all the world. The printing press had dissolved the political ideas of Europe into a vast and at first indeterminate fermentation, but that other great innovation, the ocean-going sailing ship, was inexorably extending the range of European experience to the furthermost limits of salt water.

The first overseas settlements of the Dutch and Northern Atlantic Europeans were not for colonization but for trade and mining. The Spaniards were first in the field; they claimed dominion over the whole of this new world of America. Very soon however the Portuguese asked for a share. The pope—it was one of the last acts of Rome as mistress of the world—divided the new continent between these two first-comers, giving Portugal Brazil and everything else east of a line 370 leagues west of the Cape Verde islands, and all the rest to Spain (1494). The Portuguese at this time were also pushing overseas enterprise southward and eastward. In 1497 Vasco da Gama had sailed from Lisbon round the Cape to Zanzibar and then to Calicut in India. In 1515 there were Portuguese ships in Java and the Moluccas, and the Portuguese were setting up and fortifying trading stations round and about the coasts of the Indian Ocean. Mozambique, Goa, and two smaller possessions in India, Macao in China and a part of Timor are to this day Portuguese possessions.

The nations excluded from America by the papal settlement paid little heed to the rights of Spain and Portugal. The English, the Danes and Swedes, and presently the Dutch, were soon staking out claims in North America and the West Indies, and his Most Catholic Majesty of France heeded the papal settlement as little as any Protestant. The wars of Europe extended themselves to these claims and possessions.



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In the long run the English were the most successful in this scramble for overseas possessions. The Danes and Swedes were too deeply entangled in the complicated affairs of Germany to sustain effective expeditions abroad. Sweden was wasted upon the German battlefields by a picturesque king, Gustavus Adolphus, the Protestant "Lion of the North." The Dutch were the heirs of such small settlements as Sweden made in America, and the Dutch were too near French aggressions to hold their own against the British. In the far East the chief rivals for empire were the British, Dutch, and French, and in America the British, French, and Spanish. The British had the supreme advantage of a water frontier, the "silver streak" of the English Channel, against Europe. The tradition of the Latin Empire entangled them least.



Europeans tiger hunting in India
(From the engraving of the picture by Zoffany in the British Museum)

France has always thought too much in terms of Europe. Throughout the eighteenth century she was wasting her opportunities of expansion in West and East alike in order to dominate Spain, Italy and the German confusion. The religious and political dissensions of Britain in the seventeenth century had driven many of the

English to seek a permanent home in America. They struck root and increased and multiplied, giving the British a great advantage in the American struggle. In 1756 and 1760 the French lost Canada to the British and their American colonists, and a few years later the British trading company found itself completely dominant over French, Dutch and Portuguese in the peninsula of India. The great Mongol Empire of Baber, Akbar and their successors had now far gone in decay, and the story of its practical capture by a London trading company, the British East India Company, is one of the most extraordinary episodes in the whole history of conquest.



The last effort and fall of Tippoo Sultan
Singleton

This East India Company had been originally at the time of its incorporation under Queen Elizabeth no more than a company of sea adventurers. Step by step they had been forced to raise troops and arm their ships. And now this trading company, with its tradition of gain, found itself dealing not merely in spices and dyes and tea and jewels, but in the revenues and territories of princes and the destinies of India. It

had come to buy and sell, and it found itself achieving a tremendous piracy. There was no one to challenge its proceedings. Is it any wonder that its captains and commanders and officials, nay, even its clerks and common soldiers, came back to England loaded with spoils?

Men under such circumstances, with a great and wealthy land at their mercy, could not determine what they might or might not do. It was a strange land to them, with a strange sunlight; its brown people seemed a different race, outside their range of sympathy; its mysterious temples sustained fantastic standards of behaviour. Englishmen at home were perplexed when presently these generals and officials came back to make dark accusations against each other of extortions and cruelties. Upon Clive Parliament passed a vote of censure. He committed suicide in 1774. In 1788 Warren Hastings, a second great Indian administrator, was impeached and acquitted (1792). It was a strange and unprecedented situation in the world's history. The English Parliament found itself ruling over a London trading company, which in its turn was dominating an empire far greater and more populous than all the domains of the British crown. To the bulk of the English people India was a remote, fantastic, almost inaccessible land, to which adventurous poor young men went out, to return after many years very rich and very choleric old gentlemen. It was difficult for the English to conceive what the life of these countless brown millions in the eastern sunshine could be. Their imaginations declined the task. India remained romantically unreal. It was impossible for the English, therefore, to exert any effective supervision and control over the company's proceedings.

And while the Western European powers were thus fighting for these fantastic overseas empires upon every ocean in the world, two great land conquests were in progress in Asia. China had thrown off the Mongol yoke in 1360, and flourished under the great native dynasty of the Mings until 1644. Then the Manchus, another Mongol people, reconquered China and remained masters of China until 1912. Meanwhile Russia was pushing East and growing to greatness in the world's affairs. The rise of this great central power of the old world, which is neither altogether of the East nor altogether of the West, is one of the utmost importance to our human destiny. Its expansion is very largely due to the appearance of a Christian steppe people, the Cossacks, who formed a barrier between the feudal agriculture of Poland and Hungary to the west and the Tartar to the east. The Cossacks were the wild east of Europe, and in many ways not unlike the wild west of the United States in the middle nineteenth century. All who had made Russia too hot to hold them, criminals as well

as the persecuted innocent, rebellious serfs, religious sectaries, thieves, vagabonds, murderers, sought asylum in the southern steppes and there made a fresh start and fought for life and freedom against Pole, Russian and Tartar alike. Doubtless fugitives from the Tartars to the east also contributed to the Cossack mixture. Slowly these border folk were incorporated in the Russian imperial service, much as the highland clans of Scotland were converted into regiments by the British government. New lands were offered them in Asia. They became a weapon against the dwindling power of the Mongolian nomads, first in Turkestan and then across Siberia as far as the Amur.

The decay of Mongol energy in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries is very difficult to explain. Within two or three centuries from the days of Jengis and Timurlane Central Asia had relapsed from a period of world ascendancy to extreme political impotence. Changes of climate, unrecorded pestilences, infections of a malarial type, may have played their part in this recession—which may be only a temporary recession measured by the scale of universal history—of the Central Asian peoples. Some authorities think that the spread of Buddhist teaching from China also had a pacifying influence upon them. At any rate, by the sixteenth century the Mongol Tartar and Turkish peoples were no longer pressing outward, but were being invaded, subjugated, and pushed back both by Christian Russia in the west and by China in the east.

All through the seventeenth century the Cossacks were spreading eastward from European Russia, and settling wherever they found agricultural conditions. Cordons of forts and stations formed a moving frontier to these settlements to the south, where the Turkomans were still strong and active; to the north-east, however, Russia had no frontier until she reached right to the Pacific.

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The American War of Independence

The third quarter of the eighteenth century thus saw the remarkable and unstable spectacle of a Europe divided against itself, and no longer with any unifying political or religious idea, yet through the immense stimulation of men's imaginations by the printed book, the printed map, and the opportunity of the new ocean-going shipping, able in a disorganized and contentious manner to dominate all the coasts of the world. It was a planless, incoherent ebullition of enterprise due to temporary and almost accidental advantages over the rest of mankind. By virtue of these advantages this new and still largely empty continent of America was peopled mainly from Western European sources, and South Africa and Australia and New Zealand marked down as prospective homes for a European population.

The motive that had sent Columbus to America and Vasco da Gama to India was the perennial first motive of all sailors since the beginning of things—trade. But while in the already populous and productive East the trade motive remained dominant, and the European settlements remained trading settlements from which the European inhabitants hoped to return home to spend their money, the Europeans in America, dealing with communities at a very much lower level of productive activity, found a new inducement for persistence in the search for gold and silver. Particularly did the mines of Spanish America yield silver. The Europeans had to go to America not simply as armed merchants but as prospectors, miners, searchers after natural products, and presently as planters. In the north they sought furs. Mines and plantations necessitated settlements. They obliged people to set up permanent overseas homes. Finally in some cases, as when the English Puritans went to New England in the early seventeenth century to escape religious persecution, when in the eighteenth Oglethorpe sent people from the English debtors' prisons to Georgia, and when in the end of the eighteenth the Dutch sent orphans to the Cape of Good Hope, the Europeans frankly crossed the seas to find new homes for good. In the nineteenth century, and especially after the coming of the steamship, the stream of European emigration to the new empty lands of America and Australia rose for some decades to the scale of a great migration.

So there grew up permanent overseas populations of Europeans, and the

European culture was transplanted to much larger areas than those in which it had been developed. These new communities, bringing a ready-made civilization with them to these new lands, grew up, as it were, unplanned and unperceived; the statecraft of Europe did not foresee them, and was unprepared with any ideas about their treatment. The politicians and ministers of Europe continued to regard them as essentially expeditionary establishments, sources of revenue, "possessions" and "dependencies," long after their peoples had developed a keen sense of their separate social life. And also they continued to treat them as helplessly subject to the mother country long after the population had spread inland out of reach of any effectual punitive operations from the sea.

Because until right into the nineteenth century, it must be remembered, the link of all these overseas empires was the oceangoing sailing ship. On land the swiftest thing was still the horse, and the cohesion and unity of political systems on land was still limited by the limitations of horse communications.

Now at the end of the third quarter of the eighteenth century the northern two-thirds of North America was under the British crown. France had abandoned America. Except for Brazil, which was Portuguese, and one or two small islands and areas in French, British, Danish, and Dutch hands, Florida, Louisiana, California and all America to the south was Spanish. It was the British colonies south of Maine and Lake Ontario that first demonstrated the inadequacy of the sailing-ship to hold overseas populations together in one political system.

These British colonies were very miscellaneous in their origin and character. There were French, Swedish and Dutch settlements as well as British; there were British Catholics in Maryland and British ultra-protestants in New England, and while the New Englanders farmed their own land and denounced slavery, the British in Virginia and the south were planters employing a swelling multitude of imported negro slaves. There was no natural common unity in such states. To get from one to the other might mean a coasting voyage hardly less tedious than the Transatlantic crossing. But the union that diverse origin and natural conditions denied the British Americans was forced upon them by the selfishness and stupidity of the British government in London. They were taxed without any voice in the spending of the taxes; their trade was sacrificed to British interests; the highly profitable slave trade was maintained by the British government in spite of the opposition of the Virginians who—though quite willing to hold and use slaves—feared to be swamped by an ever-growing barbaric black population.



George Washington
(From a painting by Gilbert Stuart)

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Britain at that time was lapsing towards an intenser form of monarchy, and the obstinate personality of George III (1760- 1820) did much to force on a struggle between the home and the colonial governments.

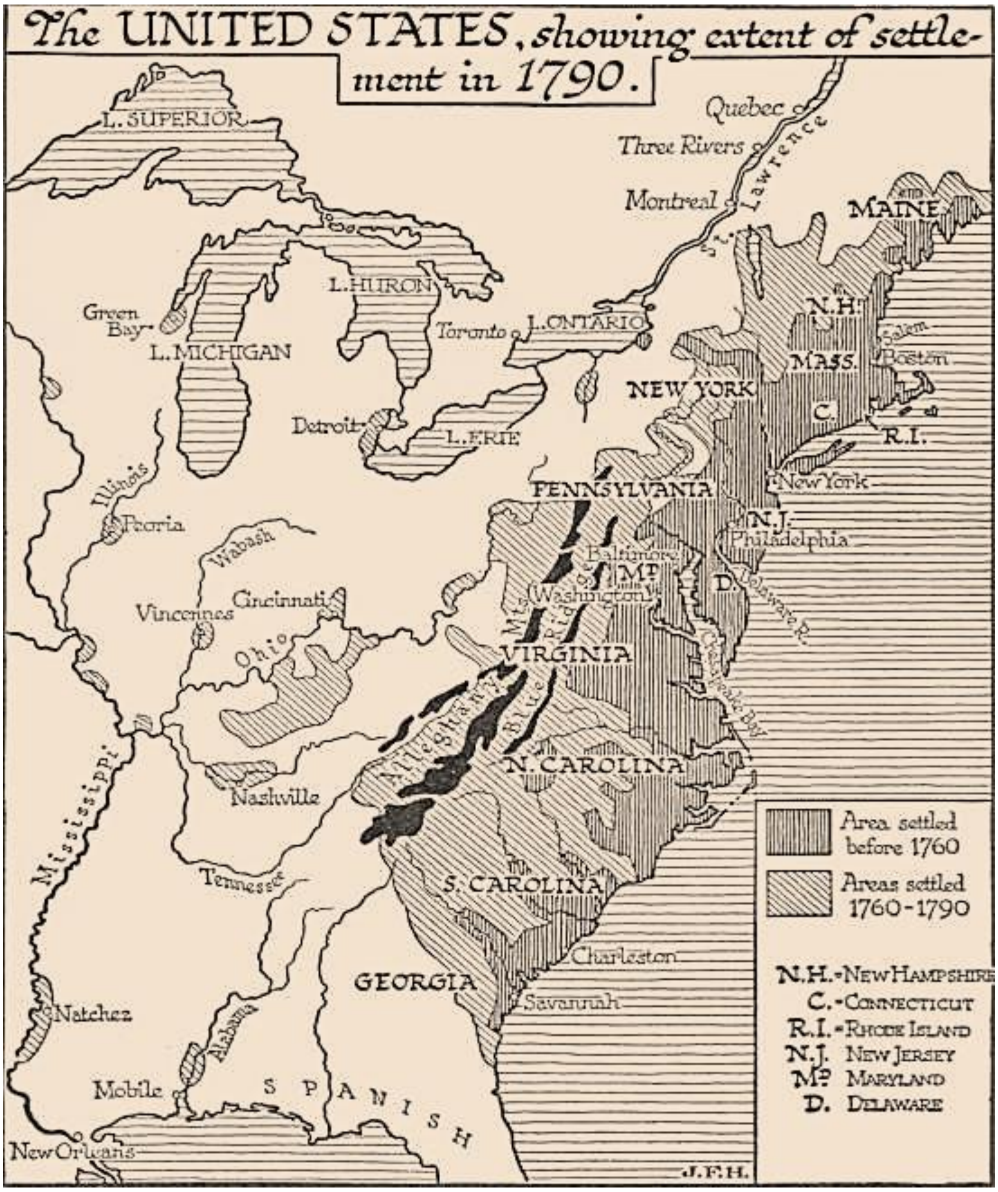
The conflict was precipitated by legislation which favoured the London East India Company at the expense of the American shipper. Three cargoes of tea which were imported under the new conditions were thrown overboard in Boston harbour by a band of men disguised as Indians (1773). Fighting only began in 1775 when the British government attempted to arrest two of the American leaders at Lexington near Boston. The first shots were fired in Lexington by the British; the first fighting occurred at Concord.



The Battle of Bunker Hill, near Boston
(From the engraving of the picture by John Trumbull in the British Museum)

So the American War of Independence began, though for more than a year the colonists showed themselves extremely unwilling to sever their links with the mother land. It was not until the middle of 1776 that the Congress of the insurgent states issued "The Declaration of Independence." George Washington, who like many of the leading colonists of the time had had a military training in the wars against the French,

was made commander-in-chief. In 1777 a British general, General Burgoyne, in an attempt to reach New York from Canada, was defeated at Freemans Farm and obliged to surrender at Saratoga. In the same year the French and Spanish declared war upon Great Britain, greatly hampering her sea communications. A second British army under General Cornwallis was caught in the Yorktown peninsula in Virginia and obliged to capitulate in 1781. In 1783 peace was made in Paris, and the Thirteen Colonies from Maine to Georgia became a union of independent sovereign states. So the United States of America came into existence. Canada remained loyal to the British flag.



For four years these States had only a very feeble central government under certain Articles of Confederation, and they seemed destined to break up into separate independent communities. Their immediate separation was delayed by the hostility of the British and a certain aggressiveness on the part of the French which brought home to them the immediate dangers of division. A Constitution was drawn up and ratified in 1788 establishing a more efficient federal government with a president holding very considerable powers, and the weak sense of national unity was invigorated by a second war with Britain in 1812. Nevertheless the area covered by the States was so wide and their interests so diverse at that time, that—given only the means of communication then available—a disintegration of the Union into separate states on the European scale of size was merely a question of time. Attendance at Washington meant a long, tedious, and insecure journey for the senators and congressmen of the remoter districts, and the mechanical impediments to the diffusion of a common education and a common literature and intelligence were practically insurmountable. Forces were at work in the world however that were to arrest the process of differentiation altogether. Presently came the river steamboat and then the railway and the telegraph to save the United States from fragmentation, and weave its dispersed people together again into the first of great modern nations.

Twenty-two years later the Spanish colonies in America were to follow the example of the Thirteen and break their connexion with Europe. But being more dispersed over the continent and separated by great mountainous chains and deserts and forests and by the Portuguese empire of Brazil, they did not achieve a union among themselves. They became a constellation of republican states, very prone at first to wars among themselves and to revolutions.

Brazil followed a rather different line towards the inevitable separation. In 1807 the French armies under Napoleon had occupied the mother country of Portugal, and the monarchy had fled to Brazil. From that time on until they separated, Portugal was rather a dependency of Brazil than Brazil of Portugal. In 1822 Brazil declared itself a separate Empire under Pedro I, a son of the Portuguese king. But the new world has never been very favourable to monarchy. In 1889 the Emperor of Brazil was shipped off quietly to Europe, and the United States of Brazil fell into line with the rest of republican America.











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